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I'm not going to be talking about Demons this week (There are only a handful of Demon cards in existence, and I believe the rest of our writers have said every interesting thing there is to say about them...), but I will be talking development. But first...

## Magic R&D Intern Position Available

We're looking for someone to help us playtest here at Wizards. If you (a) can build really good constructed decks, (b) are capable of giving constructive criticism, and (c) want to move to Washington for six months, this could be the break you're looking for. The job is basically "play **Magic** until you drop, with a few meetings thrown in," and if that doesn't sound like fun, I don't know what does!

You can read more here. If you think you fit the bill, don't hesitate to apply.

## Art Appreciation

One interesting thing that happened during *Fifth Dawn* design was that the team was handed a stack of already-completed art and told they had to design cards to fit. Things aren't normally done that way; normally, art is commissioned to fit the cards we designed. But early in *Mirrodin* design, as part of an experiment, our art director gave some artists "free rein" and told them to paint anything they wanted that looked like it would fit on *Mirrodin*, and that R&D would make cards to fit (Platinum Angel is one example of such a card.). Well, even though the *Mirrodin* and *Darksteel* teams both had ample opportunities to work as many of these pieces of art as they could into their sets, it didn't really happen on any large scale. So *Fifth Dawn* got stuck with the bulk of them and had no one else to pass them on to. It wasn't that the art wasn't good, it was just that the experiment was such a deviation from the way design was normally done. It was easier for the first two teams to just say, "The next set can use this stuff." Well, we were the last "next set." We had to use the art, as the next block (Kamigawa) certainly had no need of pictures of metallic monsters, and we weren't about to let all that artistic effort go to waste.

So I'll show the art and what the design team came up with, and then explain if development liked the ideas or not.



Ok, it's a flier, squid-like, kinda big, and looks like it could be white or blue. We had a card early in the file that was a 3/3 white flier...

RA01\_TOM

[Flying Archaeologist]

2WW

Creature - ?

3/3

Flying

When CARDNAME deals combat damage to an opponent, return target artifact card from your graveyard to your hand.

That card looked like it would fit the art, so we changed the name to "Illusionary Archaeologist" and made its creature type "Illusion."

Towards the end of design, we felt that we needed a bigger, splashier white flier, and scrapped the Archaeologist in favor of an Angel with a completely new ability. At the same time, we felt we didn't have enough affinity cards in *Fifth Dawn*, and were fleshing out a nice-sized flier in blue uncommon.

UU01\_TOM

[Air Beast]

6UU

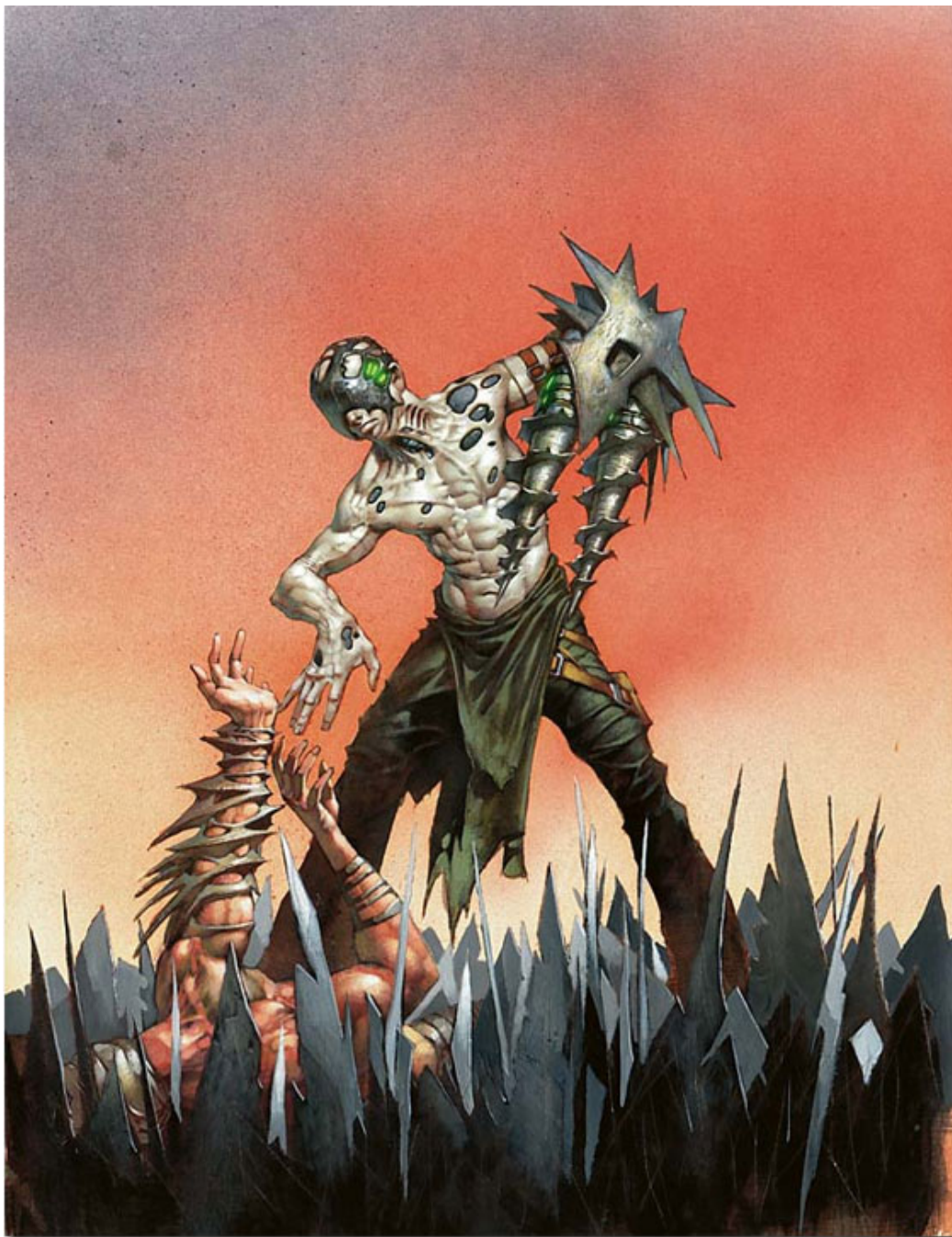
Creature - Beast

4/4

Flying; affinity for artifacts

That card seemed perfect for the flying squid.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Correct! You now know it as Qumulox. They even made the card better with an extra point of power. What happened to the white Angel? It was "stolen" for *Champions of Kamigawa*, and replaced in development by Auriok Windwalker.



There were three cards in the design file that lead designer Mark Rosewater marked as possible homes for this nasty drill-armed fellow:

CB01\_TOM

[Metaltooth Mongrel]

2B

Creature - Hound

2/2

Discard an artifact card: CARDNAME gets +2/+2 until end of turn.

CB02\_TOM

[Zombie Flanders]

1B

Creature - Zombie

3/3

Whenever a player plays a spell, CARDNAME gets -1/-1 until end of turn.

UB01\_TOM

[Junkyard Dog]

3B

Creature - Hound

1/1

Whenever a permanent goes to a graveyard from play, you may put a +1/+1 counter on CARDNAME.

I was personally rooting for either of the last two, as I had designed Metaltooth Mongrel and was hoping that it would remain a Hound to further the homage to Vampire Hounds from the *Exodus* set, a card I absolutely adored. But the creative team, given the option, felt the art went best on that guy, and made him a Human Warrior.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Correct! The card stayed as it was and became Fleshgrafter. Zombie Flanders also made it through unscathed (it's now Blind Creeper). Junkyard Dog also became a human, was moved to rare, and tweaked a little. You know it as Moriok Rigger.



I can't recall the original design stats for the card that eventually bore this art, but it was something like this:

UB02\_TOM

[Drawback Horror]

1BB


Creature - Horror

5/5





Whenever you play a spell, you lose 1 life.

That's probably not it exactly, but whatever it was, it spurred this comment from me:

AF 3/27: This can't be right. It looks better than Negator in some ways right now, and if you change it to two life it starts looking like Dross Harvester, a rare in Mirrodin. Not sure where to go here. Maybe a smaller flyer, like a 4/3 or a 3/3.

It quickly became a  3/3 flier, and the ability was changed to hurt you whenever anyone played a spell, to mirror Zombie Flanders. The name was changed to "Ebony Drake" and the type to Drake to

match the Pete Venters artwork you see above.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Correct, but only after many attempted changes. The card went from  3/3 flier to  4/2 flier, then back to  3/3, and finally went full circle back to , where it was printed as Ebon Drake. Note that the card was 4/2 when it was put into the "Special Forces" theme deck, which would have made it a better fit with the rest of the cards in the deck. But it was changed back to 3/3 after the decks were finalized.



This art loomed over our heads for a while. It looks very spider-like and very green. But it isn't a spider proper, since it only has six legs. And because *Mirrodin* already contained Tel-Jilad Archers--the quintessential "spider" for the block, which was an Elf--we weren't sure what to do. Eventually we decided to create an artifact spider that would just happen to have very green art.

UA16\_TOM

[Copper Spider]

6

Artifact Creature - Spider

2/5

CARDNAME may block as though it had flying.

Whenever CARDNAME blocks, you may remove a +1/+1 counter from the creature it is blocking. If you do, put a +1/+1 counter on CARDNAME.

So it basically stole counters from stuff it blocked. Not thrilling, and this was the best of a crop of "uncommon artifact spiders" we had come up with.

Right before the set was to go to development, lead developer Brian Schneider made a comment that too many of our cards had way too much random stuff going on. Every card had a brick of text on it, and the set was too overwhelming. Either we could clean it up, or he'd do it for us.

As we weren't happy with the spider ability we had, we decided that Copper Spider didn't need to have any weird ability to be somewhat interesting. Just the fact that it was an artifact spider that would let every color deal with fliers was novel enough. So we gave it one more point of toughness and took off the counter-stealing ability.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Correct! Arachnoid was printed in just this way. Simple and pure.



We knew we had to use this vampire art and it had to be cool. This art was displayed at GenCon the year before, long before *Mirrodin* came out, and we knew fans were expecting there to be some kind of vampire in the block somewhere.

We wrestled with several different ideas, and eventually submitted this:

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RB01_TOM  
[Mephidross Vampire]  
5BB  
Creature - Vampire  
4/4  
Flying  
Whenever CARDNAME deals damage to a creature or player, put two +1/+1 counters on CARDNAME.
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I wasn't a huge fan of this card (it felt too much like a souped-up Baron Sengir for my liking), but I didn't have any better ideas, so it went to development like this.'

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Boooooo! Ah well, you can't win them all. Developer Devin Low can take the credit for coming up with the super-cool card that actually saw print as Mephidross Vampire. The development team did keep the phrase "combat damage" off the card (opening the door for the vicious Triskelion combo), and also kept... the name. Good enough!



It's an artifact, it's creepy, and it looks like it eats stuff. Here's the card I came up with for this fellow:

UA17\_TOM  
[Iron Gargamel]  
4  
Artifact Creature  
2/2  
Sacrifice a creature token: CARDNAME gets +3/+3 until end of turn.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: (Imagine a red "X" in a box and a sound effect "RRRRRRRT!" like on Family Feud.) I thought the idea was cool, but development had a tough time imagining this thing eating Soldiers, Beasts, Angels and whatever other kinds of tokens were running around. It didn't make a lot of sense to them, as there's no real way to differentiate a token creature from a regular creature from a flavor standpoint. I tried to argue using Dogged Hunter and Aether Snap as precedent, but I obviously didn't win.

They eventually came up with the "bigger Onulet" ability and used this art for Anodet Lurker.



A little artifact centipede... hmmm... I submitted:

CA10\_TOM

[Steel Centipede]

3

Artifact Creature - Insect

1/1

CARDNAME is unblockable.

Whenever CARDNAME deals damage to a player, you may remove a counter from target permanent.

The creative team was a little sad that we wanted to attach that art to a little 1/1, as they envisioned that centipede as some sort of metal monstrosity. The design team argued that the art had no scale, so a 1/1 it was!

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Correct! It was moved to uncommon and the phrase "combat damage" was added, but otherwise it stayed the same and went out the door as Ferropede.



A little ornery-looking artifact creature that appears to be trying to fly. The design team submitted:

CA09\_TOM

[Hopper]

3

Artifact Creature

2/2

Tap an untapped artifact you control: CARDNAME gains flying until end of turn.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Close, but no cigar. I was playing against Brandon Bozzi in a sealed deck game, and he had out a Hopper. On his next turn, he played a Bonesplitter, equipped Hopper with the Bonesplitter, tapped the Bonesplitter to give Hopper flying, then attacked for 4. "Oh yeah," I said, "the tapped equipment problem."

Since so many players incorrectly tap equipment on attacking creatures, we tried really had to avoid having "tap an artifact" as an activation cost in the *Mirrodin* block. Lodestone Myr and Clock of Omens -- neither of which are common -- are the only cards in the block to have that cost. Development changed Hopper's activation to "sacrifice an artifact," and he was printed under the name Thermal Navigator.



This one bugged us. We liked all of our green creatures and none of them really fit as a delicate dryad. The closest thing we could suggest was:

CG02\_TOM

[Quirion Explorer Reprint]

1G

Creature - Elf

1/1

T: Add to your mana pool one mana of any color that a land an opponent controls could produce.

The problem was that Dryads in **Magic** are known for landwalking, not producing mana, so it seemed we were at an impasse.

Luckily, the *Darksteel* team came to the rescue. A hole had opened up in their set in green uncommon late in development, and Henry Stern decided he and his team could come up with a card that would fit the Dryad art. And thus was born Tanglewalker.



This one is funny. I mean, look at that thing. What in the world is it? It's clearly red, and clearly pretty darn big. But other than that is anyone's guess.

Bill Rose designed a card for *Darksteel* called Roto-Tiller:

[Roto-Tiller]

1RR

Creature - Beast

7/6

Trample

At the beginning of your upkeep, sacrifice CARDNAME unless you sacrifice two lands.

Note that Bill also invented Eater of Days--he loves cheap fatties with drawbacks.

Roto-Tiller was in *Darksteel* for a long time, up until they needed to find a place for the story character Slobad, Goblin Tinkerer. At that point, Roto-Tiller was moved off to *Fifth Dawn*. We didn't particularly want the card, so it sat in our unused pile for a long time.

Until we saw the big balloons. Randy Buehler, Rosewater and I had quite a few laughs over our decision to stick the balloon art onto Roto-Tiller. "It isn't flying," we rationalized, "It's walking on that big tentacle! And it's going to trample that little guy!" Many people in R&D weren't buying it, and Rosewater himself was unsure. He actually changed the "evasion ability" to "CARDNAME cannot be blocked by fewer than two creatures" as opposed to trample, since he felt trample made so little sense with the art. But he later relented and changed it back.

DEVELOPMENT SAYS: Somehow, amazingly, correct! They left this one alone, mostly on the strength of the card's mechanical design. The art was weird, sure, but no one had any better ideas of what the big balloon could be.

And to put a capper on the card, Brian Tinsman came up with the off-the-wall name "Cosmic Larva." Fabulously weird!

That's the story of ten pieces of art that made it to card form. The funny thing is, there were even more! We had cards in the design file called "Chrome Serpent," "Little Bugger," and "Thug Bot" that attempted to use other pieces of pre-made art, but the cards didn't survive. I can't show you the art since it might show up in some future set. Overall, though, the experiment went well once we embraced it.

### Last Week's Poll

Does Furnace Whelp deserve the creature type Dragon?		
Yes	10225	78.4%
No	2812	21.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13037</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

If 78% of people agreed with every decision we made, I'd be a happy man.

### This Week's Poll

**Do you like the idea of cards designed to match art?**

- Yes – Artists have cool ideas that should be made into cards.
- No – Let designers come up with cards, and then artists can paint them.

Submit

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