

## On the bannings and the new *Champions* offerings Prismatic in the *Champions* Era

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*Hello and welcome to Prismatic Tonight. I'm your host, Doug Beyer.*

*Katie Couric is away on vacation.*

*Our top story tonight is a wave of [bannings](#) that hit **Magic** Online's Prismatic format in September, rendering the format radically changed but ultimately, in the opinion of one reporter, more fun. We turn now to Beffle549 with the report.*

TOP STORY: In Praise of Bannings

I had a first-hand chance to see some of the destruction the bannings had caused. Powerful tutor bases were demolished. Sundering Titan was left homeless. Entire ways of deckbuilding, dashed in one sweep of the DCI's hand.

And the players couldn't be happier.

That's right: we players of Prismatic have come to understand the bannings as a gift from above, a way to appreciate the quirks of our format without losing the powerful cards we love to play. I can remember when one Wish combined with a sufficiently stocked collection meant game over, no matter the game-state. When Quiet Speculation filled players' graveyards with a rainbow of broken flashback spells. When a disgusting Krosan Tusker-Genesis loop was set up with the flick of a Buried Alive.

*Am I the only one who gets queasy when he sees this?*

There were so many of these game-ending and difficult-to-disrupt tutoring options in the environment that a Prismatic deck could merely be a collection of them, and the best decks had them all. Decks had little reason for variation or even theme, and became stocked with tutor engines and one-of "silver bullet" toolboxes. Setting up inescapably brutal boards was easier with five-color 250-card decks than in tournament constructed formats.

Of course, there were exceptions. Many players used Wishes for fun ways to grab their favorite foil creatures or to set up hilarious Panoptic Mirror imprints, or simply to find a land. Some players Buried Alive'd a suite of Laquatus' Champions to pull off unlikely combo-kills with Twilight's Call. But these decks just couldn't compete with one-card engines like Wild Research or inexorable loops like Tooth and Nail + Eternal Witness.

What is life like after the bannings? Quieter. Wackier. Less consistent. More fun. Flashback cards still generate card advantage, but you draw them one at a time now. Comes-into-play-effect creatures still advance your strategies while getting you a body, but sometimes you draw the Viridian Shaman instead of tutoring up Flametongue Kavu perfectly on time. Genesis still rules the playing field, but it's much harder to get into the grave with anything good to recur. Jilt and Wrath and Desolation Giant still wreck house, but they sit in your hand instead of your collection to wait for their moment. And Darksteel Colossus is still 11/11 trample and indestructible, but you have to pay mana for

## What's a Tutor?

A "tutor," in a **Magic** context, loosely means a card that searches for another card. It's based on the venerable Demonic Tutor or the more recent Diabolic Tutor, but also includes more restricted searching effects like Eladamri's Call (creatures only) or Burning Wish (sorceries only, and searches a collection instead of your library). Prismatic's recent bannings removed many tutors from the format.

him. *All* the mana.

## What Tutors Remain

There are still ways to draw just the card you need out of your 250-carder, but now it's at a reasonable cost—and some formerly second-tier tutors have leaped into the limelight.

- Few people cast an even sidelong glance at Diabolic Intent before, but now it's an efficient way for creature-heavy decks to search for a bomb, especially if that bomb can make up the lost card advantage.
- Trinket Mage is great even if it's only searching up Wayfarer's Bauble or your Incarnation-hosing Scabbling Claws, but I generally see it grabbing the still-ridiculous Skullclamp. (I wouldn't be surprised to see the 'Clamp leave this format as well one day. I worry when I see people playing Taj-Nar Swordsmith and/or Steelshaper's Gift with only one piece of equipment in their decks.)
- Fierce Empath is fierce indeed these days: he gets you a Tusker or a landcycler before you're at six mana, or a huge beastie after. Compare that to Merchant of Secrets...
- Speaking of elves, Wirewood Herald, the "chump-tutor champ," gets you quite an array of utili-elves these days, from Viridian Shaman to Glissa to Caller of the Claw to Elvish Aberration.
- Planar Portal is and always has been slow, slow, slow. Luckily, so is this format sometimes, so this ultra-tutor can pull its weight when the game comes down to late-game topdeck wars.

And then there's the black Bringer. Let's talk about him for a second.

## The Case for Bringer of the Black Dawn

Bringer of the Black Dawn is a 5/5 black creature castable with WUBRG. It replaces a draw with a tutor for the cost of 2 life per upkeep. Isn't this a one-card tutor engine just like Wild Research or Buried Alive, attached to a big trampling body to boot?

Well, yes. And I have a feeling that R&D considered banning it along with the other tutors. But its main drawback is that it *is* attached to that big trampling body. Sure it's a 5-toughness black creature, but if **Magic** is full of anything it's full of ways to kill creatures. You spend three turns Rampant Growth and Far Wanderings'ing for mana to cast your prized Bringer. Then you tap out on your fifth turn for the black Bringer to block your opponent's rampaging Blind Creeper and to tutor for a card that can stabilize you...and your opponent untaps and casts Chainer's Edict, or Beacon of Destruction, or Magma Jets your Bringer after combat damage, or whatever. It's not immune. I can tell you that it actually feels a bit fragile—you pin your hopes on tutoring up a chain of Avaraxes or Head Games'ing your opponent's grip or going nuts with Mirari's Wake and Future Sight, and instead you've Duressed a removal spell for WUBRG and you're still getting hit with that 3/3 (okay, Blind Creeper might be 2/2 this turn). Add that to the fact that Prismatic has almost no ways of tutoring for a Bringer anymore (the aforementioned Fierce Empath is basically it, baby) and it's not as big a deal as you might think. Of course, that's not much consolation when you're staring down an active Bringer *without* a Terminate or whatever in hand, but hey, it's still a great creature. Just not a brokenly hard-to-deal-with one.

There's one last tutor still left Prismatic that I should mention—soon to become, in many players' opinion, the most important repeatable tutor of all.

## Back in the Newsroom

*Thanks, Beffle549. Stay tuned, folks, for these important messages. After the break, Beffle099 tells us why Champions of Kamigawa is her favorite Prismatic set yet. And later, Beffle549 returns to finish his report on the effects of the bannings on Prismatic, and reveals the powerful repeatable tutor you'll soon be seeing more of. I'm Doug Beyer.*

## Special Message: Arc-Slogger

RHODA: Jan, why does your Red Zone always smell so lemony fresh?

JAN: It's simple, Rhoda. I use Arc-Slogger.

RHODA: Arc-Slogger? That 5-mana red Beast? But I thought Prismatic decks didn't usually run much red. Doesn't it have a high red commitment?

JAN: That's true, Rhoda. But I always have room in my pantry for Arc-Slogger! It does the job of ten other sweepers, even if I can only make RR. It clears my board, swings for 4, and goes to the head. It also picks up the kids from soccer practice. In short, it's a game-winner!

## Test Results Show!



RHODA [holding Arc-Slogger]: Ahh, Arc-Slogger. So that's your secret! [wags a finger good-naturedly at Jan, then glances across the table] Uh, oh, my opponent has a morph creature!

JAN: Guess it's time for *you* to *Get Da Slog!*

RHODA AND JAN: [laugh]

ANNOUNCER: Get your Arc-Slogger today! Find it in the *Mirrodin* aisle. *Get Da Slog!*

**Back in the Newsroom**

*Welcome back, everyone. We turn now to Beffle099, who has a report on a new plane landing at Prismatic Interplanar Airport: the world of Kamigawa.*

*Champions of Kamigawa* comes to Prismatic

I was ecstatic to see *Champions of Kamigawa* release in **Magic Online**. The set offers plenty of new toys for Prismatic players to choose from, including fatties, legends, utility creatures, opportunities for card advantage, and some of the best mana-fixing ever. And I mean ever.

## Mana Fixing

In a format that already had fourteen sets' worth of green cards and color-friendly artifacts feeding it, it would have been tough to improve on the mana-fixing Prismatic already had available. Well, Sakura-Tribe Elder has succeeded anyway: it is, in almost every circumstance and game situation, and for the same cost, better than that absolute Prismatic staple, Rampant Growth. You've already heard about its success at [Champs](#) a week ago, but this card will be an automatic four-of in Prismatic now too. It may be proper now to run both Elder *and* Rampant Growth, and remove four of something slower, such as Far Wanderings or Journey of Discovery: the Rampant Growth effect for 1G, whether as a Snake or as a Sorcery, is just enormously efficient acceleration-plus-color-fixing. And Sakura-Tribe Elder does all the things that creatures can do—it can attack and block, get recurred with Gravedigger or Genesis or Oversold Cemetery, imprint onto a Soul Foundry for evil fun, pick up a Sword of Fire and Ice, et cetera. Let's see your Sorcery version do *that*. And hey. It's common. Get four. You probably already have four...

Speaking of terrific common mana-fixers, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Kodama's Reach. Kodama's Reach joins Harrow and Journey of Discovery on the list of three-mana methods to secure access to two different colors with one spell, which can obviously be a huge boon in your Prismatic mana development. I'm not sure it's better than Harrow, which is worse to have countered, but can be cast as an instant. I do think it's better than Journey of Discovery, however. Kodama's Reach does for a smooth three mana almost all of the work that Journey of Discovery does entwined for six.

Speaking of journeying, I'm curious to see what Journeyer's Kite can do. It is awfully good at getting you a basic land every turn if that's the kind of thing you want to do, but I'm not sure that its ability to do that long-term is really what a regular Prismatic deck wants. A regular Prismatic deck wants a sudden, early boost of multicolor mana ramping, and the Kite may be more of a midgame card. I think there are possibilities for using it for decks that create a huge board full of permanents that slowly take over the game, like Mobilization or Future Sight, or for decks that use land as a raw resource, like Goblin Trenches or Wand of the Elements, however. Surely it's something to consider. Let's move on to the new library-searching spells available in *Champions*.

## Tutors of Kamigawa

*Champions of Kamigawa* comes with an interesting set of conditional tutors. Eerie Procession gets you an Arcane spell for 2U in your main phase—a bit slow, but perhaps just the thing for a control deck

that needs to find the right type of removal right now, or for a deck that wants to set up some Splice tricks. Godo, Bandit Warlord is a very nice way to get out a game-ending Tatsumasa, the Dragon's Fang, but playing it to grab Lightning Greaves and just swing—*twice*—is a fine alternative. Iname, Death Aspect gets you a graveyard full of spirits, which gets you ready for soulshifting action or just for “Entombing” Eternal Dragon. Night Dealings is a very fun card that you should try out—I'd love to see it combined with a Granite Shard, Plague Spitter, or some other repeatable damage source to help protect itself and your other resources.

Gifts Ungiven is a very powerful, but very thinky, tutor. Will Gifts Ungiven win the award for “Card Responsible for the Most Waiting Time” in Prismatic? I mean, you get to hunt for four different cards from your now 240-some-odd-card library, and meanwhile you feel like you should have some sort of strategy—ideally you're looking for four similar cards, or two pairs of similar cards, or a way to nastily give your opponent no real choices. Do play one or more copies of this card, but do the world a favor: when you put it in your deck, please have two or three different gameplans in mind for when you're going to cast it. Here are a few for your consideration:

### **Some Gifts Ungiven Packets**

- The “Removal Recursion”: Flametongue Kavuu, Thornscape Battlemage, Oversold Cemetery andGenesis
- The “Bad Choice”: All Suns' Dawn, Anarchist, Eternal Witness, Gravedigger
- The “Guaranteed Sweeper”: Wrath of God, Akroma's Vengeance, Starstorm, Pernicious Deed
- The “Incarnation Headache”: Anger, Wonder, Glory, Genesis

I'm sure you can come up with more (it's something good to do while you download `chk.pig`—gotta love those colorful **Magic Online** filenames). With these packets-o'-goodies held firmly in mind ahead of time, you might actually get your Gifts before your opponent's concession leaves them, sadly, Ungiven.

Moving on to my favorite *Champions* tutor of all.

For this reporter, it's all about Time of Need. Time of Need is Living Wish for your favorite legend—and you have over 40 new legendary creatures added to the card pool (bringing the total to about 100 in the Prismatic environment). It could be Time for the quick beats of Pianna or the defense of Lieutenant Kirtar. It could be Time for Llawan to finally keep your opponent's Arcanis at bay, or Time for Empress Galina to steal it away. It could be Time to lock out your opponent with Braids or ping with Jeska. Artifact removal? Glissa, Sunseeker. Lifegain? Gerrard Capashen. Creature removal? Visara. Counter support? Ertai the Corrupted. Air force? Rith, the Awakener. Game over? Hello, Akroma? Can you come out and play? Oh, you're busy? Send Phage out then!

And don't forget that Time of Need can tutor up legend *removal* of sorts, now, too. If your opponent's Rorix Bladewing is about to eat your head, tell your own Rorix: “Hey, it's kind of a Time of Need over here,” and your own copy will tell that imposter across the board a little story about the new Legend Rule. Of course you have to be able to cast the legend you're going to duplicate, but hey, that's pretty good for a relatively tutorless format.

## Solid New Additions

What other toys does the set bring us?

### Dudes

From the rarefied heights of Myojin of Cleansing Fire down to the weenie utility of Hana Kami, there are a lot of quality creatures in *Champions*. Any of the flipping “heroes” that does something useful (Nezumi Shortfang) or beats efficiently (Budoka Gardener) before flipping is worth a look. The “spiritcraft” creatures like Soilshaper or Earthshaker can get along nicely in a spirit-heavy deck. There are cheap utility legends from Kiku, Night Flower (if you're emphasizing black) to Eight-and-a-Half-Tails (if you're emphasizing white). And there are finishers aplenty: Kumano, any of the Dragon Spirits (especially the nicely splashable Keiga, Tide Star and Ryusei, Falling Star), Kodama of the North Tree, Konda, Lord of Eiganjo. And in the dark horse category, there's little Zo-Zu the Punisher: I'd like to see Zo-Zu in a deck designed to exploit Prismatic's tendency to fill the board with lands.

### Removal

Something in your way? *Champions* has new options for getting through to that planeswalker across the table. Rend Flesh is my favorite here; it provides a great new way to kill almost all the critters around. Blind with Anger is a worthy trick for your red 20, capable of 2-for-1s. Reciprocate can really round out your white cards, especially if you're trying to deemphasize your double-white mana cost requirements. Pain Kami is a Blaze on legs, but there are probably faster options. Also consider both Hearth Kami and Kami of Ancient Law, which are cheap bears that double as removal. Red has good burn in *Champions*; I'm especially interested in the reusable Hanabi Blast and the splicing possibilities of Glacial Ray.

### Other Goodies

This reporter's favorite cycle in *Champions* is the legendary Hondens. Any of them is splashable and fine on its own—I'd especially consider Honden of Life's Web for a steady army, and Honden of Seeing Winds for a one-sided Howling Mine. It says something about their power if I'm recommending them in a 250-card format: you're going to like getting their repeated effects even if they don't “power up” with multiple Shrines as they were designed to do—or you're going to like seeing your opponent use aVindicate on that rather than on your creature that is beating him down.

Be sure to get a copy of each of the legendary color-aligned lands: they're all great if you draw them and they can replace a basic land with no worries about them coming into play tapped or pinging you. I'm especially fond of Shizo, Death's Storehouse. Plus you can tap Captain Sisay for one of these lands if your opponent's copy is bugging you—remember the new Legend Rule. Lastly, if you didn't have enough reasons to run them, they can all kill an opposing Horobi, Death's Wail!

A piece of equipment I'm quite impressed with is Kusari-Gama. If you've never played it or been wrecked by it, read through it a couple of times. Go ahead, it takes a good thorough read. Basically

the equipped creature becomes a massive thorn in your opponent's side—either it has firebreathing or it unleashes Japanese chain-style death on his entire team.

There's plenty more where that came from. Try putting together a Singleton Prismatic deck, and try out all the *Champions* goodies you can get your hands on. The set is one of the most surprisingly synergistic sets in **Magic**—and that's a new twist for a format that's mostly about maximizing single cards.

## Back in the Newsroom

*Thanks, Beffle099, for that report. We turn back, now, to Beffle549 for the conclusion of his report: the repeatable tutor whose stock is rising in the post-Champions Prismatic format.*

That Sassy Sisay

It's already been mentioned that Time of Need is a great new tutor. But the most important legend you'll probably be tutoring for in the new Prismatic is, of course, that legend tutor herself—Captain Sisay.

She was great before. She's just about insane now. She grabs everything that Time of Need grabs, and oh, and she also tutors for Mindslaver and Legacy Weapon, too. Prismatic players, take note: keep a Magma Jet (or an analogue thereof) handy.

It's always an exciting time to watch a new set—especially a whole new block—seep its way into your favorite format. I'll see you at the Prismatic tables.

## Back in the Newsroom

*Thanks again, Beffle549. That's it for us here at Prismatic Tonight. We leave you now with cutting-room footage of Prismatic games from around the globe. This is Doug Beyer signing off. Good night!*

## As the Credits Roll...

- One player cast Viridian Shaman to blow up a random Vault of Whispers. When his opponent took his turn to tap out for the notoriously powerful Mind's Eye, it looked bad for the Shaman's

controller—but that player Repulsed his own Shaman and replayed it before a single card could be drawn from the artifact. Do the card advantage math—it adds up to approximately +(a zillion) for the Shaman player.

- One player discarded Akroma to his Wild Mongrel. But did he immediately attack for three with the Mongrel? He did not. He first cast Betrayal of Flesh on that dead Akroma, reanimating it, and swung with the 3/3 Mongrel *and* the 6/6 flying first-striking trampling pro-red-and-black legendary angel. Sensible.
- This anecdote is about the power of the quick beatdown. One player had stabilized at 6 life, after developing a scary board of Sliver Queen and Mirari's Wake—and was ready to unleash an army of 2/2 sliver tokens (and arm them with Skullclamp). But his opponent calmly played Dirge of Dread to give his Cabal Archon and Glory Seeker fear, attacked for 4, and threw the Archon at the head for the win. It doesn't take expensive creatures to do 20, folks.
- During one turn, a player cast an Engineered Explosives for 0, saced it to Shrapnel Blast to kill Bringer of the Red Dawn, cast Eternal Witness to get back Shrapnel Blast, saced a Skullclamp to kill Blazing Specter, and then Magma Jetted a third creature.
- One player put Skullclamp on a fully sunburst Etched Oracle, with a mana up. Ughhhhh.
- One player cast a chaining army of Embermage Goblins (a stylish alternative to the brutal Avarax). When his opponent Earthquaked for 1, he had Oversold Cemetery to recover them one by one. Unfortunately he eventually lost to an Empyrial Plated Shoreline Ranger.