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Thursday, December 09, 2004

Scott Johns: "But this column doesn't *do* anything!"
Mark: "No—It *does* nothing."

That's right, kids. In the immortal tradition of *Seinfeld*, today's column is about nothing. Well, sometimes it's about Kjeldoran Phalanx. And sometimes it's about Form of the Dragon. And sometimes it's about Accumulated Knowledge. And sometimes it's about the mating dance of the common wombat (no, wait, that was last month). Occasionally Aaron Forsythe will burst through my front door in a goofy manner and mooch something from my fridge. Fun times.

Nothing gets a bad rap. What's so awful about the absence of all things? Are you telling me you wouldn't enjoy a leisurely vacation in the murky depths of space? Are you??? I imagine it would be quite relaxing—No deadlines, no email, no oxygen. Aaahhh. The concept of nothing more commonly denotes not the absence of everything—just the absence of whatever it is you're looking for at the time. For example, I may complain that my refrigerator has nothing in it, but it's not empty by any means. And if you don't believe me, just ask the sentient clump of mold that lives behind the black goop and the thing that used to be a tomato.

Nothing to Worry About

What all this is getting to is the card <sound effect of very loud silence>. Um, the card . Dang it! The *Unhinged* card that has no name. I personally loathe the name (or lack thereof) of this card, and I argued frequently with Mark Rosewater about it. The ability is fantastic, but I felt that the annoyance factor of trying to refer to this card far, far outweighed the fun factor of leaving off the name. Trying to refer to Prince when he was named <unpronounceable glyph> didn't make me dance with glee; rather, it irritated me to no end. My pleas obviously didn't work. It seems that Rosewater equates irritation with fun. So, for the remainder of this column, I will be referring to this card by name. Names that I give it. Let's just say I activate its ability. This is anytime and anywhere, is it not?

One of the most obvious uses for is to combo it with one of its *Unhinged* comrades, Now I Know My ABC's. Put these two together and you're just about halfway to anywhere you want to go.

Paul Barclay, all rumors to the contrary, actually does know his ABC's, so he spent some time coming up with winning board conditions. Some of his suggestions:

Now I Know My ABC's + Kjeldoran Phalanx + Venomous Dragonfly + Quirion Trailblazer



"Rules" corner: Despite my creative license during this column, you can only change this card's name to the name of another printed **Magic** card. No changing it to "Quizzically Perplexed Jive-Talking Lhurgoyf" or "Mr. Wigglesbottom."


Now I Know My ABC's + Kjeldoran Outpost + Vizzerdrix + Questing Phelddagrif

Now I Know My ABC's + Teferi's Puzzle Box + Jhovall Queen + Erg Raiders (or any of over 600 other cards which include a D and G)

Neat. He also noted the tremendous alphabetical usefulness of Alexi, Zephyr Mage. The first thing to note here is that in order to win with Now I Know My ABC's, Now I Know My ABC's must be in play, and that automatically knocks out some tricky letters like K and W. The second thing to note is that in order to win with Now I Know My ABC's, you're playing with *Unhinged* cards, so Titleless Joe is legal in your format. It's the same color as Now I Know My ABC's, it only costs two mana (as opposed to Vizzerdrix, Kjeldoran Phalanx, and Jhovall Queen), and it's extremely flexible.

What to do with the rest of the deck? My first solution was to throw all of Paul's suggestions together. Except for the easily replaceable Erg Raiders, all of the cards were white, blue, or green. But too many cards were too expensive, and I began cutting. I also started taking the lands into account. My first move was to use lands that included D and G to replace Erg Raiders. That way, Now I Know My ABC's, Teferi's Puzzle Box, Jhovall Queen, and a land would give me a win. I eventually refined that strategy: What if every land in the deck contained the same specific reasonably obscure letter? If every single land had a V in it, I could ignore V completely in my nonland permanents! Thanks to the snow-covered lands, it wasn't that hard to do.

Pangram Fever



Main Deck

60 cards

4 Faerie Conclave	4 _____	3 Jeweled Torque
4 Havenwood Battleground	4 Alexi, Zephyr Mage	4 Now I Know My ABC's
2 Rushwood Grove	3 Daraja Griffin	2 Phyrexian Lens
2 Snow-Covered Forest	3 Kjeldoran Phalanx	2 Talisman of Progress
4 Snow-Covered Island	3 Questing Phelddagrif	4 Teferi's Puzzle Box
7 Snow-Covered Plains	4 Quirion Trailblazer	_____
1 Soldevi Excavations	_____	15 other spells
_____	21 creatures	
24 lands		

The deck has a number of four-card (plus a land) victory conditions, as well as these three-card (plus a more specific land) victory conditions:

Now I Know My ABC's + Alexi, Zephyr Mage + Jeweled Torque + Snow-Covered Forest or Faerie Conclave

Now I Know My ABC's + Teferi's Puzzle Box + Jeweled Torque + Havenwood Battleground or Rushwood Grove

Captain Indecisive can only make things easier.

"Rules" corner: The ability doesn't wear off. Once you change its name, it will keep the new name until you change its name again. It won't go back to [nothing].

Apropos of Nothing

Crusader wrote to me to suggest two interactions for Volrath's Nameshifter. One was to combo it with Retraced Image. Think about it: On turn 2, you play Blank Slate Boy. On turn 3, you change its name to Akroma, Angel of Wrath, play Retraced Image, and put an Akroma, Angel of Wrath into play from your hand for free. (Note that the "legend rule" doesn't take effect because only the real Akroma is legendary.)



I took this ability and ran with it. "Rules" corner: You can choose Bifurcate goes a step farther any card name for Blanky's than Retraced Image—you ability, not just the name of a snatch a giant creature from out creature. of your *deck*, not your *hand*, and put it into play. Mask of the Mimic is cheaper than Bifurcate, it's an instant while Bifurcate is a sorcery, and it's the same color as the Master of Dis Guys... but it requires you to sacrifice another creature to play it.

I soon realized that there was no reason for me to limit myself to only fetching giant creatures. And when I say "realize," I mean that Crusader flat-out suggested this as a method to get Gleemax into play. Although Bifurcate will let me fetch only a creature, Retraced Image isn't picky, and Mask of the Mimic has a loophole. It will only target a creature, but it will fetch any kind of card.

Of course, the deck completely fails if I don't find an Amnesiac. Myr Servitor will let me return any of them in my graveyard to play, and it serves as excellent Mask of the Mimic food. Skyshroud Sentinel will let me fetch them from my library (after I spend the mana to change their names to Skyshroud Sentinel, of course).

"Rules" corner: The "anywhere" note means you can use What's My Name Again?'s ability while it's in your graveyard, hand, or library. Or even out of the game. If you're playing an *Unhinged* format, it's the best mana sink ever made. You'll never take mana burn again. Except for 1/2 mana burn.

The only thing left is to fill the deck with ridiculous fatties and broken enchantments that I'd like to play for free as early as turn 3.

Witness Protection



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 _____	4 Bifurcate
4 City of Brass	1 Akroma, Angel of Wrath	1 Decree of Silence
4 Forest	4 Birds of Paradise	1 Form of the Dragon
3 Gemstone Mine	1 Darksteel Colossus	4 Mask of the Mimic
3 Island	3 Myr Servitor	4 Retraced Image
2 Mirrodin's Core	1 Platinum Angel	1 Yawgmoth's Bargain
2 Treva's Ruins	1 Serra Avatar	_____
4 Yavimaya Coast	4 Skyshroud Sentinel	15 other spells
_____	1 Sundering Titan	
24 lands	1 Verdant Force	

	21 creatures	

Nothing to Wear

Identity Thief has too many uses to cram into decks in this humble little column, but I'll throw some more out there anyway.

- Use it with the *Odyssey Shrines* (not the good Shrines)! Change its name while it's in your graveyard.
- Similar but different—Use it in your graveyard to pump up your Kindles and Flame Bursts.
- Winnow + Dr. Underscore = Cantrip monowhite Vindicate that can't hit lands.
- Supplement your Spirit of the Night or Viashivan Dragon engines. You still need the Urborg Panther or the Kyscu Drake, but this can sub in for the Breathstealer, Feral Shadow, or Spitting Drake.
- The deck I nearly made but didn't: Your Title Here + Pack Hunt + Pyromancy. Fetch three Dracos at once.

Nothing Lasts Forever

Crusader's other suggestion was to pair The Sound of One Hand Clapping with Bazaar of Wonders. Ouch. Let me be clear about this: O!U!C!H! That is harsh beyond belief. So, naturally, I love it. With this combo, you have the ability ①: Counter target spell. (How? When your opponent plays a spell, Bazaar of Wonders triggers. In response, find a Bob from Accounting in play or in your graveyard and change its name to the name of that spell. When the Bazaar's ability resolves, it will counter the spell.) Um, that should win you the game. Sure, Blinkmoth Nexus or other man-lands can still get you, and you need a way to deal with permanents already on the board. But seriously: Ouch.

I decided that this deck wanted card drawing. Accumulated Knowledge is happy to see I'm Running Out of Clever Ways to Say Blank in the graveyard. Intuition is happy to see Accumulated Knowledge, but you may often be better off fetching three Bazaar of Wonders. Urza's Hot Tub turns You Know the Card I Mean into a Diabolic Tutor. Let's be clear now—don't change its name to "Diabolic Tutor"; change its name (while it's in your hand) to the card you want to fetch, then discard it to the Hot Tub. You can get whatever card in your deck you want for 3 colorless mana.

My favorite card-drawing trick, though, is to pair Enough Already with My First Tome. You need to be holding It Has Malleable Flavor Text Too and any other card that has flavor text (such as an artifact land, which is why they're in the deck) while you have My First Tome on the table. Change Mr. Wigglesbottom's flavor text into exactly what the other card's flavor text is. (Yes, the flavor text ability works, but you might want to have a printout of the *Unhinged* FAQTIWDAWCC handy when you spring this for the first time on somebody.) Then activate My First Tome and read that flavor text. If your opponent guesses the blank card, reveal the one that really has that flavor text. If your opponent guesses the one that really has that flavor text, reveal the blank one. It's a 2-mana Jayemdae Tome! Of course, this is probably vastly illegal and the powers that be (otherwise known as "Mark Rosewater"), having never noticed this loophole before, may swiftly close it. There might be some talk about how you're supposed to play fair, and rigorous techniques for using My First Tome may be invented, including placing the card whose flavor text you read face down on the table so you can't pull a switcheroo. I don't know what he'll rule—so get away with this while you can!



"Rules" corner: Despite the "anytime" comment, you can't use Ooflotak's ability while another spell or ability is in the midst of resolving.

My last trick is to combo Nameless One (Not the *Onslaught* One) with Grim Reminder. Once your opponent casts a spell—any spell—you can change the card's name in your library to the name of that spell, then play Grim Reminder to find and reveal it. Goodbye, 6 life. Undercover Brother is shuffled back into your library, and you can fish Grim Reminder out of your graveyard to do this over and over. So the basic idea of this deck is that when your opponent casts a spell, you counter it, or make him lose 6 life, or both. And if he holds his spells, Iron Maiden will get him. (By the way: There are Iron Maidens in the deck.) And to clean up any pre-Bazaar messes, to supplement the Iron Maidens, and to take advantage of your card drawing, the deck naturally has Turbulent Dreams. What better way to use your post-Bazaar dead cards?

How Bazaar



Main Deck

60 cards

1 Darkwater Catacombs	4 _____	4 Accumulated Knowledge
6 Island	_____	4 Bazaar of Wonders
3 Polluted Delta	4 creatures	4 Grim Reminder
1 Reflecting Pool		4 Intuition
4 Salt Marsh		4 Iron Maiden
4 Seat of the Synod		3 My First Tome
1 Swamp		4 Sleight of Hand
1 Temple of the False God		4 Turbulent Dreams
3 Vault of Whispers		1 Urza's Hot Tub
24 lands		32 other spells

One last fun tidbit: Bazaar of Wonders can't prevent you from playing more Namey Namersons. Just change its name while its still in your hand to something that isn't in play or in the graveyard and it escapes the Bazaar's clutches.

Until next week, have fun with nothing.

Mark

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