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# Walk Softly And Carry A Big Acrostic



Mark Rosewater · Making Magic  
Monday, December 13, 2004

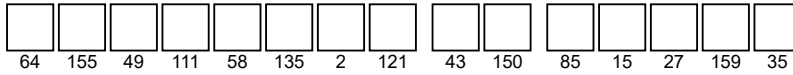
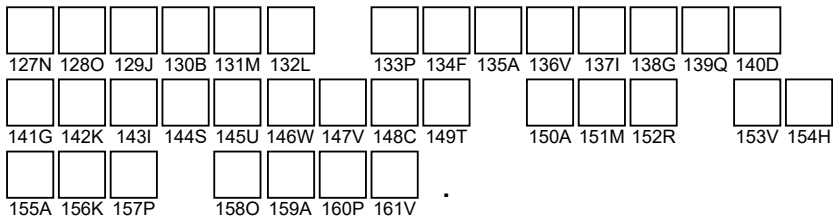
Welcome to Puzzle Week! This week we've decided to try something way, way off the beaten path and try a very untraditional theme. (Puzzles if you didn't catch the subtle hint in the title.) So I thought long and hard about what kind of puzzle would allow me to interweave **Magic** design stories. And then Mark Gottlieb suggested doing an acrostic. You see, Mark has a bit of a past with puzzle-making (way too extensive for me to summarize here, but if it involves puzzles, Mark's probably done it).

For those unfamiliar with acrostics, here's how they work. The goal of the puzzle is to figure out a quotation. (This one is by me as there's not a lot of historical quotes about **Magic** design as it relates to puzzles.) Each letter of the quotation is assigned a chronological number. The letters from the quotation are then broken up and rearranged to spell a number of words (twenty-three for this puzzle). Each word is then given a clue. Solve the clues and you can start piecing together the quotation. Sound simple enough?

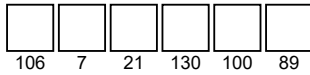
To try to provide the weekly dosage of **Magic** design material, I've tried to choose as many words as possible that pertain to **Magic** design. (I was shocked by how many I was able to get. – Hey, maybe that Gottlieb does know a thing or two about puzzles.) If you need some extra help (or just want to double-check your answer) the solution has been posted in the message board for this article.

Note that for most systems you should be able to actually enter your answers in for each question and the acrostic will automatically populate with the letters in their correct spaces. However, some system configurations may not work this way, in which case you can usually just enter the answer and then transfer the letters to the acrostic by typing them into the puzzle yourself. (Here at the office we found this was the case with Macs running Internet Explorer, but Macs seemed fine with Firefox or Safari.) In a real pinch, you can also just print the puzzle out and have at it with good old pencil and paper. But enough of my non-puzzle yapping. Let's do some acrostic!

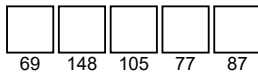
1G	2A	3T	4I	5V	6J	7B	8W	9F	10N	11P	12R	13M	14G	15A	16L	
17D	18E	19F	20V	21B	22I	23P	24K	25L	26M	27A	28W	29V	30M	31F	32T	33W
34V	35A	36D	37O	38M	39S	40D	41R	42U	43A	44N	45Q	46H	47J			
48L	49A	50E	51D	52P	53V	54G	55S	56N	57M	58A	59W	60I	61L	62F	63V	64A
65D	66P	67T	68G	69C	70D	71O	72P	73U	74M	75J	76W	77C	78D	79Q	80I	81H
82M	83K	84D	85A	86G	87C	88S	89B	90M	91H	92R	93I	94M				
95I	96T	97M	98D	99Q	100B	101V	102I	103P	104U	105C	106B	107M	108G	109V		
110J	111A	112O	113R	114D	115L	116U	117G	118P	119F	120D	121A	122M	123E	124W	125J	126G



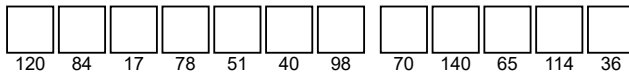
A) This is an artifact that I really liked and always wanted to bring back in a revamped form. The trick to solving this design puzzle was to recreate it as a multi-colored enchantment.



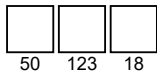
B) This marquee artifact's original card power inspired a white enchantment in *Unhinged*.



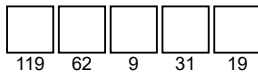
C) This reprint in *Mirrodin* spent its entire time in design as a strictly inferior version of the reprint. And design still believes to this day that the strictly inferior version would have seen constructed play.



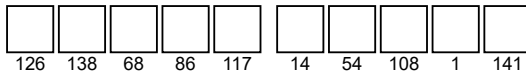
D) The key to solving a Sliver design problem in *Tempest* was to simply obsolete this card.



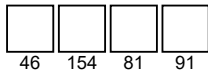
E) If a **Magic** designer wishes for enlightenment, he could turn to this school of Mahayana Buddhism.



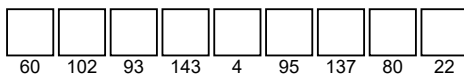
F) This black instant gives -1/-1 to target creature.



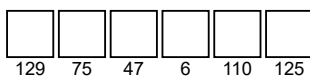
G) The inspiration for this mechanic was the *Unglued* card B.F.M.



H) The 2004 Magic World Champion, for example.



I) In its cycle, this card could best be called "the red artifact boon".



J) Slang term for a small creature.

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142	156	24	83

K) Word that comes after "splice".

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132	48	25	61	115	16

L) The key to solving the design puzzle that this mechanic presented was to realize that these creatures needed to be able to use their ability on any creature, not just on each other.

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82	107	134	26	30	97	13	38	151	94	131	90	57	74	122

M) This artifact was tweaked years later by adding three to its mana cost and subtracting two from its activation cost.

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10	127	44	56

N) This card's art was not commissioned for a **Magic** set. The current art director saw the piece at an art show and bought the rights to the image.

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112	71	158	37	128

O) A mathematical term, a breakfast cereal, and a word used in **Magic** (although most often following another word).

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133	118	66	157	23	52	11	103	160	72

P) This card (which was first almost printed in a black-bordered set, then almost printed in a silver-bordered set, and then finally was printed – in a black-bordered set) was the answer to the design puzzle of how to capture the essence of a popular but rules-troubling rare instant from Alpha.

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79	99	45	139

Q) The enthusiastic devotion that a good **Magic** designer should have.

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12	113	41	152	92

R) This group of cards was the result of trying to solve the puzzle of making connected cards that didn't reference one another by name in their text boxes.

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55	88	144	39

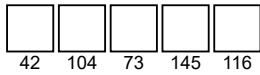
S) It believes that humans are born as a blank slate with the potential to do anything.

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3	67	32	96	149

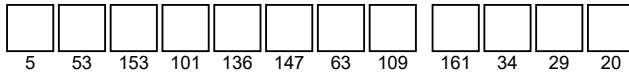
T) This mechanic was the result of solving the puzzle of "how can an instant not be an instant?"

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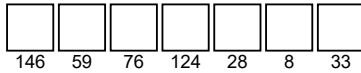
U) Slang term for something you have to deliver if you hope to win.

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V) This nonbasic land was created to solve an age-old puzzle of **Magic** design: What penalties can nonbasic lands have other than “comes into play tapped”? Incredibly, this card ended up appearing in a set released *before* the set it was originally designed for! (When the card was designed the development team at the time stole it away from the design team to fill a hole in the set they were finishing up.)

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W) This mechanic was created when the designers solved the puzzle of how to make a number of seemingly different cards into one mechanic.

And that, my faithful readers, is my column for today. A little different, I know. I'm curious to hear any feedback on what you thought of it.

Join me January 3rd when I get into the mindset of an ass, and next week when the first of the two Best of 2004 weeks begins on [magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com).

Until then, may you enjoy the puzzles in your life.

Mark Rosewater

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