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January 31, 2005



Q: "Is the guy that's missing in **AWOL's** picture the same guy with horns that's in **Urza's Hot Tub**?"

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

"Yes. I mean, if you were going **AWOL**, where better than a hot tub with some attractive babes and Urza's head? (Yes, while its not all that clear in the art, that's Urza's severed head in an inner tube. Gerard cut it off many years ago if you weren't paying attention to the novels.)"

January 28, 2005



Q: "I have a bye on my tournament description. What is a bye and what are they used for?"
--Kris
Sacramento, CA, USA

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

"Thank you for your question, Kris. First, I trust what Kris refers to as a 'tournament description' is what the DCI calls a Match History. A Match History is a DCI member's comprehensive record of their participation in DCI-sanctioned tournaments, including the opponents they faced in each round, the result of the each match, and the ratings result from each match. DCI members can obtain access to their detailed Match History by becoming a **Magic** Player Rewards member; the application page is [here](#).

"A bye in a player's Match History usually means that person wasn't paired against anyone in that round for one of the following things:

"1) In a swiss-style tournament, if there are an uneven number of players in a round, there will be one person that doesn't have an opponent. A bye is then nearly always assigned to one of the people in the event with the least number of match points that has not already been assigned a bye.

"2) In the first round of a single-elimination tournament, several people may get byes in order to fill the bracket. For example, in a single elimination tournament with 29 people, 3 people will get byes in the first round. (Well, that's the recommended method.)

"3) At Grand Prix events, some players are awarded one-, two- or three-round byes; this means these players don't have to play in the first, first two or first three rounds, respectively. Players earn byes by having a high DCI Rating in the format for that event, by winning a smaller event called a Grand Prix Trial (a GP Trial usually awards one 3-round bye for the winner), or by reaching certain thresholds in the Pro Point Standings (Pro Points are earned by competing in premier events and are based on performance).

"If you have any other questions about your Match History, Kris, shoot an email to dciz@wizards.com. We'll be happy to help!"

January 27, 2005



Q: "As the only non-*Mirrodin* Leonin(e), is **Jareth, Leonine Titan** supposed to be a displaced member of Raksha's tribe?"

--James
Williamsburg, Virginia, USA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** Creative Director:

"In Jareth's case, 'leonine' is used the way you'll find it in the dictionary: 'of, relating to, or characteristic of a lion.' If you look closely, you'll see that **Jareth** is a huge creature of living marble or alabaster, like a great statue come to life. He's at least 10 feet tall, and is not made of flesh and fur. He's definitely not a leonin.

"'Leonin,' on the other hand, is a made-up word for the race of cat humanoids you saw on *Mirrodin*. The similarity between the two words did come up when we were naming the leonin, but I honestly didn't think it would be a problem (maybe because of the difference in sound -- 'leonine' rhymes with 'diamond mine,' whereas 'leonin' rhymes with 'bowling pin'). But given how often they're confused, I guess it's time for me to suck it up and admit that it was a mistake to choose terms so similar.

"So needless to say, **Jareth** and the leonin aren't related at all."

January 26, 2005



Q: "Is there a way to find a lost DCI number?"

-- Thomas
Orinda, California, USA

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

"Thanks for the question Thomas. To retrieve a lost DCI number simply email dciz@wizards.com with your request. Additionally, if you attend a DCI sanctioned tournament, the Tournament Organizer can look it up for you if they have the DCI Coordinators CD (most likely to be found at larger/higher level events)."

January 25, 2005



Q: "I am aware that the cards **Shadowmage Infiltrator** and **Meddling Mage** were made by professional players, but how do you get the honour and what other cards have been made this way?"

--Ryan
Lowestoft, England

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

"Ryan, That is the prize for winning the **Magic** Invitational, **Magic's** equivalent of the all-star game. Each year sixteen players are invited to this round robin event and the winner gets the chance to create (and appear in) the art of his very own **Magic** card. Speaking of which, keep your eyes on magicthegathering.com over the next few weeks to hear about how we are revamping the invitation policy for the Invitational (hint: all of you are going to have a lot more input)."

January 24, 2005



Q: "I like to try and keep up with the event coverage on your site. Lately I've been noticing that the cool match reports and play-by-plays are being replaced by blogs. I was wondering about the reasoning behind this switch, and if and when the old match coverage will be coming back."


--Connor
Geneva, New York, USA

A: From **Greg Collins, magicthegathering.com** Event Coverage Producer:

"Connor,

"The direction the coverage has been moving for Pro Tour events comes from the desire we have to showcase the Pro Tour as a spectacle, rather than a collection of matches. This means we need a reporter casting a wider eye at the weekend, which is where the blog comes in. This helps 'tell the story' of an event better than a series of feature-match writeups that are heavy on play-by-play, but short on personality and style. In a similar vein, we felt going to full blog coverage at Grand Prix is not only a more effective way of covering an event that can have 700-1000 players, but also more efficient. However, this doesn't mean we're doing away with feature-match coverage. For Pro Tours, we'll endeavor to cover at least one match per round as a separate story, and Grand Prix coverage will regularly include feature matches within the body of the blog.

"Thanks for the question, and check back Jan. 28 for coverage of [Pro Tour - Nagoya](#), brought to you by Brian David-Marshall, Scott Johns, Ted Knutson, Paul Sottosanti, and Jonathan Becker."





January 21, 2005 

Q: "Why do cards that produce mana in some sets use text instead of colored mana symbols?"

--Adam
Pelham, New Hampshire


A: From **Del Laugel, Magic** Editor:


"Just like anything else that relies on technology, the way **Magic** cards are laid out and printed has changed a lot over the past twelve years. For example, Wizards has been through three different design software packages since I joined the company in May 2000. It's part of my job to make sure that these changes can't be detected by the public, but sometimes Editing and Typesetting need to work under some additional constraints.

"For the three expert-level sets released in 1999 (*Urza's Legacy*, *Urza's Destiny*, and *Mercadian Masques*), the Production folks decided that colored mana symbols in the text box had to be stored and printed as part of the art rather than as part of the text. Oh, and all eight languages had to use the same art layer. A card like **Hickory Woodlot** obviously isn't going to have  in the same place in German that it does in English. The cards had to be retemplated so that mana symbols in the text box appeared only at the beginning of paragraphs. Hence, those sets say ': Add one red mana to your mana pool' rather than ': Add  to your mana pool.'

"After the *Mercadian Masques* set was finished, Production decided that they could handle nonanchored mana symbols again. No one I've talked to remembers what changed. The lore that's been passed on to me is, 'If someone suggests anchoring mana symbols, smack 'em -- hard.'

"After *Masques*, **Magic** cards went back to using mana symbols wherever possible. The older cards received errata in Oracle so that they couldn't be affected by color-changing effects like **Mind Bend**.

"P.S. I tackled the 'add ' vs. 'add one colorless mana' question in an Ask Wizards on [April 21, 2003](#)."

January 20, 2005 

Q: "Does the trident-shaped spear in the art of **Pearlspear Courier** have anything to do with **Merfolk of the Pearl Trident**? (They're both pearl tridents and they look very similar in the pictures, and the Merfolk card references soldiers, which is the theme of the courier.)"

--Matt Claremont
California, USA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** Creative Director:

"Just a coincidence, Matt. Pearl and pearl-like stuff such as nacre come from the sea, and tridents have been associated with the sea since before Poseidon was worshipped. (It's thought that the trident was a fishing spear before it was ever a weapon.) So both elements were standard merfolk fare."

January 19, 2005 

Q: "The recent answer of the DCI members with the most sanctioned matches was very interesting. Here's another along that line... Among DCI members who played a sanctioned

match in the last month (are 'active'), which members have the lowest DCI numbers (have been playing the longest)?"

--Karl
Toronto, Canada

A: From **RE Dalrymple**, Senior Manager, Organized Play Operations:

"And the player with the longest running DCI tournament history that was active within the last month is..."

"Chris Otwell of Colorado Springs, CO. He's been playing since December 1, 1995, is a regular participant in [Friday Night Magic](#), and has a DCI number that is in the eight thousands."

January 18, 2005



Q: "Do certain creature types sometimes get costed more expensively to make up for being a 'better' creature type?"

-- Matt
Plano, Texas

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

"In *Onslaught*, Goblins, Zombies, Beasts and Elves certainly didn't get a 'creature type tax.' There are times when we watch creature types to make sure things can't get out of hand (power-wise), but rarely if ever does a creature get penalized for being a specific type. Our theory around the office is that if you like Elves, you should get good Elves. If you like Apes, you should get a good Ape once in a while."

January 17, 2005



Q: "What is the special connect between Oni and Ogres that makes them so beneficial to play together?"

--Brian
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** Creative Director:

"Brian, those familiar with Japanese folklore will probably tell you that there's really no difference between ogres and demons in Japanese mythology.

"Oni' refers to lots of different mythical monsters, from little gremlins with bony bumps on their heads to towering monstrosities. Sometimes 'o-bakemono' is used to mean 'ogre,' but that word really just means 'big monster.'

"During Kamigawa world-building, concept illustrator Hugh Jamieson sketched a mountain ogre that the creative team liked, but it wasn't necessarily demonic. And we knew we wanted to give oni special attention. So we hatched the idea of creating blood-magic-wielding ogres who worshipped oni and sometimes even bound the oni to their service. If you were to 'back-translate' this idea into Japanese folklore terms, you'd end up with minor oni (ogres) worshipping and serving major oni, albeit they have distinct creature types in **Magic**."

January 14, 2005



Q: "I was browsing Ebay for Alpha cards, and came across an Alpha **Black Lotus**. The seller posted that Alpha cards were not tournament legal for a long time. Is this true, even for Vintage format?"

--Kevin
San Francisco, CA

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

"Hello Kevin, and thank you for your question. The answer comes from the DCI Magic: the Gathering Floor Rules, located in the newly-revamped DCI Document Center (thedci.com/docs):

102. Authorized Cards

Alpha cards (cards from the first print run of the core set) may be used in decks containing non-Alpha cards only if all cards are placed in completely opaque

sleeves and only if the sleeves could not be considered marked.

If sleeves are not used, Alpha cards may be used only in decks that consist exclusively of Alpha cards.

"So, Kevin, you may use Alpha cards in any DCI-sanctioned tournament if you follow these rules, and if the card is legal in that tournament's format.

"Additional information: As many players know, Alpha cards have corners that are more rounded than cards from subsequent sets. This means that, for the purposes of playing in DCI-sanctioned tournaments, Alpha cards are marked. That's why a deck that contains a mix of Alpha and other cards must be sleeved. This section of the **Magic** Floor Rules specifically mentions marked sleeves because most card sleeves will, through use, reveal the more rounded corners of the Alpha cards they contain. Such sleeves are considered marked and (of course) should not be used in tournament play."

January 13, 2005



Q: "I keep seeing references to the player types 'Timmy, Johnny, and Spike' but I don't know what they mean. Could you please explain?"

--Wietse

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

"'Timmy, Johnny, Spike' are terms we use here in R&D to describe the different types of **Magic** players. To find out what each name means (and which one you are!), click on this link: ['Timmy, Johnny, and Spike'](#)"

January 12, 2005



Q: "I saw [Randy Buehler's article](#) on December 16 about Vanguard eventually being ported to **Magic Online**. Can we expect a parallel re-release of the paper Vanguard cards for those not fortunate enough to collect them?"

--Philip

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

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

"Unfortunately, Vanguard never really found a home in paper **Magic**. I think the problem was that some players really really liked it, but it requires you to build a specialized deck and most players didn't carry around a specialized Vanguard deck. Thus the Vanguard guy would run into non-Vanguard guy and they wouldn't be able to play. **Magic Online** solves this problem nicely -- there are so many players all hanging out in the same place that the Vanguard players can find each other pretty easily. So, no, we're not planning to release paper versions of the new Vanguard cards. However, what we are going to do is make all the rules information available on the web so anyone who wants to play Vanguard without logging in to **Magic Online** can just print out a copy of the new abilities and play with them that way."

January 11, 2005



Q: "Any word yet as to when we will be able to vote on the art submissions for You Make the Card 3?"

--Michael

Davis, CA

A: From **Scott Johns**, [magicthegathering.com](#) Content Manager:

"For all those that can't wait (and we've certainly received a lot of email on this one) we'll be starting up [You Make the Card 3](#) shortly after we're done with the *Betrayers of Kamigawa* previews, either the week of January 24 or January 31."

January 10, 2005



Q: "Why can't you search for Type One or Two on Gatherer?"

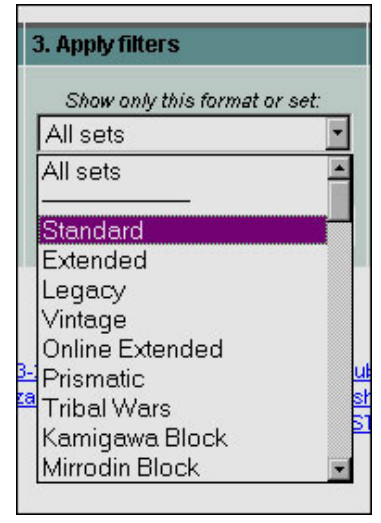
--Doug

Harwood, Ontario, Canada

A: From **Doug Beyer**, [magicthegathering.com](#) web developer:

"Hi Doug, thanks for your question. The short answer is, you can. If you're trying to search [Gatherer](#) for cards in those formats, use the upper drop-down menu under '3. Apply filters.' For Type 2 select 'Standard,' or for Type 1 select 'Vintage.'

"That's how you can ask Gatherer [what enormous creatures are currently in Standard](#) or [what sort of tutoring is available in Vintage](#). Hope that helps!"



January 7, 2005

Q: "Which set will the card from You Make the Card 3 appear in? Will it be in time for *Saviors of Kamigawa*, or will it be pushed to *Ravnica*?"

-- Eric
Singapore

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

"Eric,

"We haven't told you as we don't know yet. The placement of the card will depend on a number of factors, the most important one being: when is the card going to be done? I do promise though that as soon as we know, we'll let you know on the site."

January 6, 2005

Q: "Dear Mark Gottlieb, is it true that you and Mark Rosewater are arch-enemies? If so, why?"

-- Tal
Auckland, New Zealand

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

"No, Mark and I are not enemies. On the contrary, we have a good working relationship and strong mutual respect. Sure, it gets a little annoying sitting next to him sometimes, since whenever someone comes up to talk to him and says, 'Hey, Mark,' I always turn around. But that's not the basis for deep-seated enmity, is it? Why, I don't know why you would even ask such an absurd question. How would you get the idea that Mark and I were enemies? Um... has he said something? Did he write something in his column about me? (I never read it, so I wouldn't know.) He did, didn't he? Oh, that is so typical of him. That is exactly the kind of underhanded maneuver he (probably) pulls on me all the time. What an enormous jerk. He's plotting against me right now. I can tell. It looks like he's sitting at his computer eating chips, but that's just to fool me -- he's plotting. Well, no dice, Mr. Rosewater. I'm going to get you before you get me. Count on it. And Tal -- thanks for the tip."

January 5, 2005

Q: "Dear Mark Rosewater, is it true that you and Mark Gottlieb are arch-enemies? If so, why?"

-- Tal
Auckland, New Zealand

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

"'Arch' enemies? That's a lot of commitment. I mean, you think Superman and Lex Luthor just woke up one day and decided to be arch-enemies? No, it took years. Now, Mark and I are both focused individuals with enough drive to try and make something like this happen, but it's going to take time. You're going to need to be patient. As to why? If I worked through all the factors, I guess the brunt of the reasons fall on this letter, Tal. Us being arch-enemies seems so important to you that Mark and I really don't want to disappoint you. We're both on the same page about this, which is a problem since arch-enemies are supposed to be diametrically

opposed to each other. Yet if one of us disagree then we're never going to make this arch-enemy thing happen. But be assured, Tal, we're taking your letter very seriously. At least I am. Gottlieb seems to be taking the whole thing rather lightly. Curse him!"

January 4, 2005



Q: "In Mark Rosewater's articles about the new slices of the color pie ('[Seeing Red](#)', '[The Great White Way](#)', etc.) he gave examples at the end of each article of people or characters who are stereotypical of their respective color. In his article, '[In the Black](#)' he made mention that the color black is not inherently evil. However, he did not give an example character for the color black who was not a bad guy, villain, or bad seed. My question is who would you at Ask Wizards classify as a 'good guy' for the color black? Someone who can be classified as a hero. (Note: Bart Simpson does not count as his motives for saving the day at any point are simply to cover his own butt.)"

-- Charles
Providence, Rhode Island

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

"Charles,

"I think you're asking something of a leading question. You're asking me to provide an example of a black character with white motivations. I obviously can't do that. Black is motivated by self-interest. That doesn't mean it's inherently evil. One's motivation is very different from one's actions. White villains believe they are performing a greater good. Black heroes don't set out to do greater good, it just happens as they're saving their own butt. This, of course, begs the larger question about which is more important: the intention of doing good or the actual act of doing good. I obviously believe the latter. This means that I can only list black heroes if we define 'hero' by the actions of the character as opposed to the motivation. If your definition of hero is 'someone who selflessly acts to help others' then I can't list a black hero because selflessness flies directly into black's center motivation. If though you're looking for black characters that are generally perceived as positive and are viewed favorably by the public, then I can help you. And if you want examples of black heroes that save the day even while having very black motives, I can help you there as well.

"The first camp are black characters that function as protagonists. That is, while self-motivated they serve as characters that the audience likes. Examples of this are:

- Bart Simpson from *The Simpsons*
- The cast of *Seinfeld* (save Kramer)
- Daffy Duck
- Donald Duck
- The Howells from *Gilligan's Island*
- George Jefferson from *The Jeffersons*
- Quark from *Deep Space Nine*
- Lex Luthor from *Smallville* (I'm listing this one as this incarnation of Lex is likable)

"Next are characters that perform some greater good even though their motivation was self-interest:

- Thomas Covenant
- Elric
- Toshi Umezawa (the hero of the Kamigawa story)
- Young Han Solo
- Any character in a vengeance film where he spends the entire film killing everyone involved for killing his loved ones and/or trying to kill him

"Hopefully, this has given you a better insight into black's 'nicer' side."

January 3, 2005



Q: "I know this may seem like an odd question, but on your cards, you reference many books, e.g. Sarpadian Empires Vol. III or other sources. I was wondering if these books actually exist?"

--Anthony Gamble

A: From **Doug Beyer**, **magicthegathering.com** web developer and flavor text writer:

"Thanks for your question, Anthony. For those of you who don't know, Anthony is referring to flavor text in which a quote is attributed to a presumed outside source, like a book, poem or

song. (Quotes from the 'Sarpadian Empires' in particular can be found on *Fallen Empires* cards like *Aeolipile*, *Basal Thrull*, and *Fungal Bloom*.)

"With the exceptions of the [Love Song of Night and Day](#) (which is a complete poem written for the purposes of being quoted on many *Mirage* and *Visions* cards) and real-world quotations (see for example the *Eighth Edition* versions of *Cowardice* and *Naturalize*), the books and other texts quoted in **Magic** flavor text are fictional.

"Books, poems, songs, chants, scrolls, sayings and other bits of written lore are made up by **Magic** world-builders and flavor text writers in the same way that characters, objects and locations are. *The History of the Goblin Wars*, the *Necromancer's Handbook* and the *Scroll of Beginnings* are fictional elements of the **Magic** fantasy world in the same way that *Akroma*, the *Mirari* and the *Tel-Jilad* are. In most cases it's not necessary (or possible!) to create the entire text from which the flavor text is fictionally taken -- it's enough that their existence is implied, and the details are left to the imagination."



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