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# The House That Lies Built

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Taste the Magic  
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*Wispy whispering puppeteer,  
Invisible cutthroat, unspeakable fear.  
The shadow of House Dimir.  
Hush! Be they near?*

*Bah! Tip ye flagon,  
They don't exist!  
- A favorite toast of Ravnican drunks and fools*



They say people fear what they do not understand. This would explain the absolute dread that Ravnicans had for the "Shadow of House Dimir." For ages, the intangible manipulative power of the Dimir pushed the pawns of Ravnican society - but was rarely seen, and almost never remembered. People felt only the fear, and the subtle yet sharp blade of manipulation. Nothing to understand, everything to fear.

They also say that people deal with their fears by denying them. "There is no bogeyman." "It will not happen to us." "The Dimir do not exist." This is how, in the ten thousand years since the signing of the Guildpact, the people of Ravnica have come to deal with their long-festering fear of the Dimir. It might seem crazy that the educated and the dim-witted, the aware and the flat drunk, a whole society, would be able to perform this great collective denial. Well, it would be crazy- if they did not get plenty of help from the Dimir.



The Dimir are like the Smoking Man, or the Wizard of Oz (pre-Toto, of course), or Darth Sidious/Palpatine. They are far more comfortable controlling the scene from behind smoke, curtain, and cowl. In order to avoid blame, they do not take credit. In order to keep blood off their hands, they use yours to commit the crime. Devious, devious folk, they are.

## Duskmantle, House of Shadow –

*In a space where there is no room, in a structure that was never built,  
meets the guild that doesn't exist.*

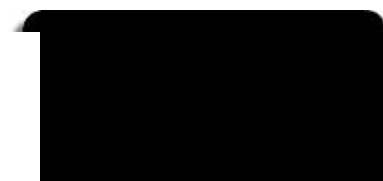
Yup, this is where the deception begins, the House that Lies Built.

*"First we tell them we don't exist. Then we help them believe it." - Szadek*

We're going to look at how the Dimir help perpetuate the myth of their own non-existence. There are a few basic techniques that the Dimir use to "not exist," though these techniques are spun in different ways to suit each shady character. "You cannot see me, so how can you stop me?" Stealth, disguise, intangibility- all characteristics of the creepers of the House. It's easy to remain a myth when nobody can tell you are there. "You have seen, now you will forget." Brain purging and forced forgetfulness are favorite techniques of the guild. If you have seen too much, you must be dealt with. After that, it is as if nothing ever happened. Myth lives on. "If you know nothing, you cannot know us." Mind shock, memory drain, intellect consumption – a mindless victim is an easy victim. With nothing to know, there is nothing to tell. This is how the Dimir have pulled a great Verbal Kint on the city. Let's dive into the cards and see how they make use of these three main Dimirisms.



## You Cannot See Me, How Can You Stop Me?



*Was this body found dead, or made that way?*

**Dimir Doppelganger** provides an interesting twist on this Dimirism. It's not really that you don't see her, it's that you don't see *her*. You see whatever poor dead schlub she chooses to incriminate with her own devious deeds. The Doppelganger's cover is two-deep. First, you will think it's your

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butcher who has nabbed your cat when it's really the ol' double D. Second, the poor butcher is too stiff and cold to prove his innocence.

The Doppelgangers are most successful when framing the victims that people do not know are dead yet. It's a lot less believable when you try and make a scapegoat out of a dude who's been dead for a week and a half (although this has different meaning in Ravnica- where the dead tend to stick around for an encore.) When there are no fresh corpses handy, the Dimir are all too happy to create one for the Doppelganger to "wear."

Do not trust everything you see.

**Twisted Justice** is an interesting example of the Dimir's unseen puppeteer's hand. The card itself represents how the Dimir capitalize on the rough "choices" that others must make. The art and flavor text illustrate how the Dimir manage to nudge these decisions in a direction that favors them.

*In Otiev's mind, he ruled in favor of the accused. But in his courtroom he was only a spectator, watching his hand deliver the sign of death.*

So, to all but the Dimir who are in the know (the spectral fellow hovering behind the judge) Otiev condemned the accused to death. Blame it on him, he gave the old thumbs down. "You know, I've never liked that old Otiev, he's such a bloodthirsty stodge." Meanwhile, poor Otiev can do nothing but follow the script of his own tragic ghost-written autobiography. All the while he wonders "when, when will my hand again be mine?" Poor guy. They used to love him. Now he's a bloodthirsty stodge.



**Dimir Cutpurse** is a literal example of "You Cannot See Me, How Can You Stop Me?" All you have to do is take a look at it. There's nothing there! Sure, there's a twist of rags and a bit of a cape, but that's just for the cameras. It would make for a strange illustration if the subject were completely invisible. It reminds me of the old "Invisible Man" TV show – where the invisible man wrapped his head in rags (just like Mr. Cutpurse) so his pals could see him. Be proud, **Magic** players, for you must be **Dimir Cutpurse's** pals. Otherwise he surely would have remained invisible. There is a chance that it just doesn't want to be seen naked by people with invisio-vision, but the odds are slim.

On a nerdy side-note; **Dimir Cutpurse** is, in my opinion, *Ravnica's* best-looking gold card. The illustration's golden lights and warm shadows meld with the gold frame perfectly- and the blue pinline provides a tasty little accent. Invisible, and still good-lookin'.

**Dimir Infiltrator** and **Ethereal Usher** work this Dimirism, though less according to what you see and more with what you touch. The Infiltrator literally cannot be stopped. Stand in its way and it'll breeze right through you, like a wave of nausea through the crowd at a Justin Guarini concert. The Usher is, well, ethereal. It's not mechanically untouchable, but in the world of Ravnica, this old hag is hardly more tangible than bad breath. Her

touch, however, does confer intangibility. The Infiltrator and the Usher hardly exist to begin with. It's not hard to believe that people would mistake them as ghosts or flickering shadows.

## You have seen, now you will forget.

*In the undercity, forgetfulness is often encouraged at the point of a blade.*

We will start at the top for examples of this Dimirism, with the one who invented them to begin with. **Szadek, Lord of Secrets**. In some ways Szadek is like other vampires - he has fangs, he flies around, and he feeds off of those he kills. But with the Lord of Secrets there is a difference. Other vampires leave their signature on their victims, the fang holes in the neck. Others make vampires of their victims. To Szadek, this is nothing but advertisement of foolish ego. The Lord of Secrets keeps his doings...secret.

When Szadek sinks his silvery teeth into his victims they leave no mark and draw no blood. Instead, they draw knowledge and memory. The first memory consumed is that of the bite itself. After that, it's whatever Szadek finds most tasty; joys, pains, deaths. An attack from Szadek is not so crude as to be painful or leave wounds. It has the devious flair of leaving victims numb and ignorant. They see him coming and fall prey to his gripping gaze. They feel his bite, and then they *have never seen him*. "Vampire? What's a vampire? ...That's crazy talk."

Circu, Dimir Lobotomist takes up where his befanged master leaves off. Those who see or know “too much” are dealt with by this scalpel-swinger. He cuts incriminating information out of the minds of enemies, also shaving out the brain tissue that would allow for recall of this lost knowledge. His work is skillfully done, and it keeps the Dimir secrets just the way Szadek likes them - secret.

Just in case there is some pesky spell that would allow selective recall, Circu and Szadek have concocted a simple spell that that purges knowledge with a broad, crude stroke. Ironically, the spell lets the victim see “the truth” (Fox Mulder would be in heaven, and then a padded room). It is called **Glimpse the Unthinkable**.



*“I am confident that if anyone actually penetrates our facades, even the most perceptive would still be fundamentally unprepared for the truth of House Dimir.” — Szadek*

## If You Know Nothing, You Cannot Know Us

**Consult the Necrosages** – Who are these mysterious characters? Nobody really knows, that’s the point. These guys are the buffers who keep Szadek and the higher-ups a mystery to the guild they rule. They are also the buffer that keeps Szadek’s hand free of the blood he orders spilt (not that he actually draws blood, as we discussed earlier- but you know what I mean.) How do the necrosages do this? By controlling information. They decide who will be enlightened and who will be put in the dark. I am sure you can guess which way that decision usually goes- “Knowledge for me, ignorance for you.” The less you know, the stupider you are, the more likely you are to believe in the non-existence of those you just watched drain your brain. And this does not just apply to enemies. The Dimir use this on their **todies**, **thugs**, and **arm-twisters** all the time. One cannot turn coat against a master who “doesn’t exist.”

Information control, it’s the bread and butter of the Dimir. It is appropriate, then, that the guild’s signature wizards are masters of bread, gaining knowledge - and butter, taking away. The **Dimir Guildmage** is usually the first line of defense against informed enemies. They hit the scene, first weakening their victims with a mind-dissolving black cloud. Then, while the enemy totters about trying to remember his name, they collect information both mundane and arcane to bring back to the Lord of Secrets. With this information, Szadek knows exactly how to erase the threat.

It works, and has for nearly ten-thousand years. Monuments tower in the city’s plazas with the Dimir Signet plain to see, and yet the Dimir have convinced the city that they are a myth.

It would be very Dimir of me *not* to inform you on pronunciations of the guild’s words. But, in true Vorthosian fashion, I will go against Blue and Black, my enemy colors, and provide this information as I always do.

**Dimir** – dih•MEER. I have heard it pronounced dee•MEER as well. The difference between the two is subtle, and the one you end up using will probably depend on the way the letter I usually rolls off your tongue. Either way is acceptable. However, to properly utter this word, it should be issued in breathy, hushed tones. It is a whispered word, if spoken at all.

**Szadek** – ZAH•dehk. The “Sz” in his name, along with those of other Ravnican names, is pronounced with a dominant “Z” sound, though agile tongues will sneak a subtle “S” sound in as well. Many Eastern European languages would pronounce this letter pair as if it were “Sh.” Ravnica has many similarities to this region, but its use of “Sz” is not one of them.

**Moroii** – MOHR•oy. This word, like “Sz” has Eastern European roots, but Ravnican pronunciation. Proper Romanian pronunciation of **Moroii** would be mohr•OY•ee. Check out [Monday’s Magic Arcana](#) to read about **Moroii**’s origin.



“The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world that he didn’t exist.”



*Matt Cavotta has always been a fantasy goober. At various points in his gooberhood, he has used his nerdy knowledge to become a professional goober. He went from scribbling pictures of his own **D&D** characters to illustrating books and cards for his two favorite games; **D&D** and **Magic**. Then he channeled his inner 7th level Illusionist/3rd level Bard and landed himself a job at Wizards as a writer. He continues to cast his illusion spells each morning, lest they find out he's just another goober.*



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