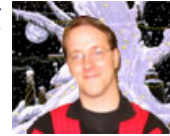


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The Gruul Hounds of War

John Carter
Saturday School
Saturday, February 4, 2006



Send your rules questions to Level Four Judge [John Carter](#). Can't find the answer to your question somewhere else, like the [Magic Comprehensive Rules](#)? Maybe he's already answered it! Try the [Saturday School Searchable Rules Database](#).

Guildpact went on sale yesterday, and the [worldwide release events](#) are all this weekend. Without much further ado, let slip this week's questions...

Q: I noticed that the Oracle text for *Wreak Havoc* reads "can't be countered by spells or abilities," but some cards, such as *Obliterate*, read "can't be countered." Is there a difference between the two? --Dejan

A: The difference is minor, and even then it's not completely consistent. The key is whether the spell is targeted or not. *Wreak Havoc* is targeted; *Obliterate* is not. If you give the target of *Wreak Havoc* protection from red (or green) in response to the spell, then the *Wreak* will be countered because all of its targets are illegal. [CR 413.2a] This is a game rule, not a spell or ability. On the other hand, *Obliterate* doesn't have any targets, so you can't get the game rules to counter it for you. Thus, restricting the can't-be-countered phrase isn't necessary since the illegal-target-countering wouldn't apply to *Obliterate*.

***Extra*:** The phrase "by spells or abilities" appears on all the targeted can't be countered spells. It also appears on *Overmaster* and *Insist*. *Overmaster* needs the phrase in case the next sorcery is targeted. *Insist* doesn't really need it - not unless there's a targeted creature spell out there someday.



Q: I have an *Orzhov Pontiff* in play. My friend takes it and then he sacrifices it to his *Thoughtpicker Witch*. Who controls the haunt ability? --Drew B.

A: *Orzhov Pontiff*'s controller immediately prior to the sacrifice controls the haunt ability. Haunt is a leaves-play triggered ability, and such triggers look back to see who controlled the permanent just before it left play. [CR 410.10c-d]

Q: I have the (by now) world famous *Djinn Illuminatus* in play. If I play a *Vision Charm* and replicate it multiple times, do I make the choice of mode for each copy or am I stuck with the original mode? --Stan M.

A: You're stuck with the original mode.

***Extra*:** Modal spells all begin with "Choose one —." Changing a spell's target doesn't do anything to the choice of mode. The modal choice will limit what your targets, if any, can be.

Q: I attack with an *Umezawa's Jitte* equipped *Kird Ape*, he blocks with *Ghost Council of Orzhova* and sacrifices it to itself after damage is on the stack. He claims that not only is my *Kird Ape* dead, but that *Jitte* gets no counters. --Aaron

A: The Ape takes damage and dies though the Council is no longer in play. [CR 310.4a] The Ape doesn't deal any damage (so the *Jitte* doesn't trigger) because the Council is no longer in play. [CR 310.4c]

Q: I make *Souls of the Faultless* lose defender and attack with it, and it takes combat damage. Do I gain any life? --A. C.

A: Since you'd be the attacking player, the life gain and loss offset each other.

***Extra*:** If something such as *Sulfuric Vortex* replaces part of the life gain and loss, then the end result won't be balanced.

Q: If I've resolved the Izzet ability of the *Mizzium Transreliquat*, can I use the temporal change ability? --Francisco

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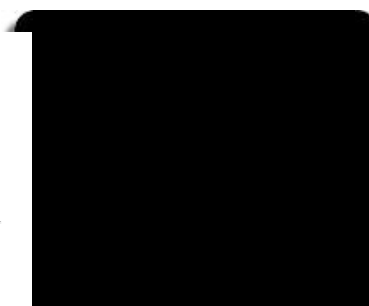
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A: Once the Izzet ability is used, the ③ ability is gone (unless the artifact copied was another Transreliquat).

Q: If I have a **Gelectrode** in play, could I keep untapping it and then re-tapping it each time I copy **Lava Spike** using the [Izzet Guildmage loop](#)? -- Danny N.

A: **Gelectrode** will trigger off a sorcery or instant with replicate only once. The replicated copies are put directly on the stack; they're not "played."

Q: How does **Drowned Rusalka** work with **Floating-Dream Zuber**? -- Bryan S.

A: **Drowned Rusalka**'s ability is put on the stack, and costs are paid. Sacrificing **Floating-Dream Zuber** to pay the cost triggers the Zuber, and the trigger is put on the stack on top of the Rusalka ability. You'd draw from the Zuber, and then you'd discard and then draw from the Rusalka.

Q: If a spell with haunt resolves and there are no creatures in play, is that spell still removed from the game? -- Patrick

A: The haunt card stays in the graveyard and haunts nothing if there's nothing to haunt in play.

Q: If **Leyline of the Void** is in play, what happens to **Darksteel Colossus**? -- Jose S.

A: **Leyline of the Void** and **Darksteel Colossus** both have replacement effects (they use "instead"). The Colossus's controller would decide whether to remove the Colossus from the game or shuffle it into his or her library. [CR 419.9a]

***Extra*:** **Planar Void** is similar, but it has a triggered ability (it uses "whenever"). Colossus's replacement effect essentially trumps **Planar Void**'s trigger by replacing the go-to-graveyard with shuffling into the library, so **Planar Void** would never trigger.

Q: I used **Trophy Hunter** equipped with a **Loxodon Warhammer** to destroy the **Firemane Angel** with the Hunter's ability. Do gain life? --Francisco C.

A: Yes. **Loxodon Warhammer** will let you gain life regardless of if the damage is from combat or from an ability. (Note: **Trophy Hunters** don't destroy Angels. State-based effects destroy Angels.)

Q: I have a **Dimir Doppelganger** copying a **Dimir Infiltrator**. If I attack and copy **Szadek, Lord of Secrets**, do I mill five cards and get five counters, or would it be one card milled and one counter? --Stan M.

A: That depends on when you shift your Dimir Doppel-trator. After your opponent has not blocked the unblockable Doppeltrator, you can either stack one damage and then change into Szadek's body, or you can change into Doppel-adek and stack five damage. However much damage was stacked is how many cards Doppel-adek will mill and counters it'll receive.

***Extra*:** As an added bonus, those counters stay on the Doppelganger if it changes. So after milling five and getting five +1/+1 counters, anything the Doppelganger becomes will have a nice +5/+5 bonus.

Q: If I have two creatures both equipped with **Pariah's Shield**, and I'm dealt damage by one source, do I have to apply all the damage to one of the creatures, or can I split it between the two? --Dan

A: All of the damage goes to one creature or the other.

***Extra*:** Combat damage might come from many sources, but it happens at one time. The same situation with two attackers dealing combat damage would let you have each source deal their damage to each of the Shielded creatures (as you see fit), or you could have just one of the creatures take it all, even if it's more than enough damage to wipe out that creature several times over.

Q: Can I use **Disembowel** to destroy an animated land like **Svogthos, the Restless Tomb**? --Christian L.

A: Yes, once animated, Svogthos becomes a legal target for **Disembowel**. You'll spend ⚡ + ①.

Q: I have a **Stinkweed Imp** in my hand, and I play **Tolarian Winds**. When it resolves, will I be able to dredge the Imp with the draw effect of the Winds? --Philippe G.

A: Yes, the Imp is in your graveyard when you would be drawing, so you can dredge any of those draws to retrieve the Imp.



Q: I have a **Circu, Dimir Lobotomist** in play, and my opponent plays a **Last Gasp** on him. If I play a Blue or Black instant and the card **Circu** removes from his library this way is a **Last Gasp**, what happens to the one just he played? --Ricardo R.

A: The **Last Gasp** on the stack has already been played. **Circu** won't do anything about it, and he'll die.

Q: I attack with an **Elves of Deep Shadow** enchanted with **Necromantic Thirst** and an **Elvish Skysweeper**. The opponent plays a **Festival of the Guildpact** preventing one damage. How do we decide which creature damages her? --Chris G.

A: Combat damage (unless double or first strike is involved) all resolves as one event. The opponent will decide which point the shield will prevent. [CR 419.7b]

Q: Since **Sacred Foundry** and **Steam Vents** are already Mountains does **Blood Moon** take away their other land type, or are you still able to tap them for the other color? --Tim F.

A: Unless the land says "Basic Land" under the picture (or has errata for basic lands from before the word "basic" appeared on them), then the land will become a "Land —Mountain." Your **Sacred Foundry** will be a nonbasic Mountain named **Sacred Foundry** that taps for $\{M\}$.

Q: I was wondering if a **Brass Man** enchanted with a **Quicksilver Dagger** can tap, untap and tap again multiple times during your upkeep. --Jacob G.

A: Yes. **Brass Man's** usage restriction is applies only to when you can pay to untap it, not how many times you can untap it.

Q: My opponent has a **Psychatog** and attacks me. I decide not to block him. He begins using the 'tog's abilities to pump him up. In response to his last pump (all the activations are still on the stack), I play **Fireblast**. Doesn't the **Psychatog** take lethal damage and die before he gets bigger and kills me? My opponent argues that the stack has to resolve. --Steve W.

A: State-based effects check when a player gets priority (such as after resolving **Fireblast**). The 'Tog is dead.

***Extra*:** More careful players will pump the 'Tog one activation at a time and let each one resolve before pumping it again. This very likely could have saved Mr. Teeth from a toasty demise.

Q: I saw this guy use **Flint Golem** with **Lure** as a combo. If three creatures block the Golem does the defending player put 3 cards or 9 cards into his or her graveyard? --Stian

A: **Flint Golem** only triggers once regardless of how many creatures are blocking it. [CR 410.9a] Only three cards will be put into the graveyard.

Q: If I unmorph my **Chromeshell Crab** using **Skirk Alarmist's** ability and then exchange the Crab with my opponent's creature, will he have to sac the creature at the end of turn? --James F.

A: At the end of turn you'll want to sacrifice the Crab, but you can't sacrifice a permanent you don't control, so nothing happens.

Q: What can I do with an **Ornate Kanzashi**? Could I play replicate, buyback, convoke, entwine, kicker, et cetera? --Tyler S.

A: Mostly you can keep your nihongami hairstyle well-coiffured. In Magical terms, you can play a spell removed from your opponent's deck. Yes, you can convoke, entwine, and kicker it. I wouldn't recommend paying the buyback though--the card will be returned to the owner's hand, not yours. [CR 217.1a]

Q: Do tokens leaving play trigger **Grave Pact**? --Francis K.

A: If they're destroyed or have no toughness, then yes. If they're returned to your hand, then obviously not. Tokens that are put in the graveyard or returned to your hand go to the respective zone very briefly and then cease to exist.



Q: I was looking through the *Guildpact* cards, and I found that **Hypervolt Grasp** has the Gruul symbol in the text box. Why is this so? --Michael L.

A: Whoops. Looks like "The Zapper" is having an identity crisis. If you won't tell anybody that it's supposed to have an Izzet watermark, this'll be our little secret.

Q: Can you please list off all the bannings so I don't get banned from playing? --U.

A: Players don't get banned - they get suspended. To avoid any deck building faux pas, there's a handy list for all DCI-sanctioned games available [right here](#).

Q: With **Stitch in Time**, what constitutes a coin flip? Can I catch the coin or insist that my opponent not catch the coin? --Samuel A.

A: A coin flip would be taking a coin and flipping to reach a random determination from two equal events. Attempts at influencing the coin flip are frowned upon and will earn a cheater a year-long suspension from sanctioned events. So how do you avoid coin flip shenanigans? There are two basic things that can protect you from unscrupulous flippers. First, no one should be touching the coin after it's tossed. If it's landing on the table unassisted, no one is assisting it to come up heads. I often see players drop coins trying to flip them. You don't need to launch the thing. Just give it a little toss and spin and let it drop. Second, you could use some other randomization method that produces a 50/50 outcome. For example, you could roll a six-sided die and call 1-3 heads and 4-6 tails. I've even seen players hold up a card (usually a basic land) and ask the opponent to guess if the set number (the tiny number at the bottom) is odd or even.

Guildpact is now legal for Limited (Draft and Sealed deck event) events. The set is legal for Constructed events starting February 20th.

That's all for this week. Next week we can expect more Gruul, Izzet, and Orzhov questions among a host of others.

Class Dismissed.

--Carter

*Carter has been playing **Magic** since 1994 and has been a certified judge since 1997. He has judged at every size and type of event, and he's always interested in new ideas to make events and **Magic** better for the gaming community. Carter enjoys helping players understand the rules, even if his analogies aren't as funny as he thinks they are.*



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