

Experiment with these Izzet-themed puzzles. **Magic: The Puzzling—*Guildpact***

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Welcome to Magic: the Puzzling, *Guildpact* edition. Once again we'll explore some possibilities that turn traditional games of **Magic** on their sides. However, I have heard that it's also The Izzet week on magicthegathering.com. I suppose it would make sense to build some puzzles based on that particular guild. If only The Izzet had anything to do with puzzles, or weird interactions, or wanting to explore possibilities!

Part I: Replication Aberration



Let me tell you a little secret: It's hard work designing puzzles. I not only have to consider all of the possible choices of cards to use and their interactions, I also have to look out for multiple solutions, and avoid any potential bugs that make the puzzle unsolvable. And of course, the audience is not satisfied with just one puzzle; they demand several. Well I've had enough! I'm going to take a page straight from The Izzet's book. I'm going to write just one puzzle, and replicate it three times. I wonder if anyone would even notice? Unfortunately, the science of puzzle replication is not as advanced as that of spell replication, so there were a couple glitches...

Puzzle 1a:

You are up against your arch nemesis: mad genius Erik Mattblog. You were initially a bit disappointed when he did not bring some wacky combination deck to the table. After all, you were prepared to win with quick beatdown via [Tin Street Hooligan](#) and Genjus. You were short on luck, though, since Erik's deck was full of creatures able to blunt your assault. Undeterred, you changed course, settled in for the long game, and are now poised to win the game this very turn.

In Play:**You (2 life):**5 [Island](#)1 [Izzet Boilerworks](#)1 [Mountain](#), enchanted with [Genju of the Spires](#)1 [Steam Vents](#), enchanted with [Genju of the Falls](#)**Erik (7 life):**6 [Forest](#)4 [Swamp](#)[Dripping-Tongue Zubera](#)[Mortipede](#) (tapped)[Pithing Needle](#) (naming [Drowned Rusalka](#))[Revenant Patriarch](#)[Silhana Ledgewalker](#) (tapped)[Wild Cantor](#)**Your Hand:**[Drowned Rusalka](#)[Gelectrode](#)[Island](#)[Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)[Rain of Embers](#)[Surge of Zeal](#)[Tin Street Hooligan](#)

You have no cards in your graveyard, and 37 cards left in your deck (none relevant). It is your first main phase.

Erik has no cards in hand, and no relevant cards in his graveyard.

Puzzle 1b:

You are up against your arch nemesis: mad genius Bert Glomatik. You were initially a bit disappointed when he did not bring some wacky combination deck to the table. After all, you were prepared to win with quick beatdown via [Tin Street Hooligan](#) and Genjus. You were short on luck, though, since Bert's deck was full of creatures able to blunt your assault. Undeterred, you changed course, settled in for the long game, and are now poised to win the game this very turn.



In Play:

You (1 life):

- 7 [Island](#)
- 1 [Izzet Boilerworks](#)
- 1 [Mountain](#), enchanted with [Genju of the Spires](#)
- 1 [Steam Vents](#) (tapped), enchanted with [Genju of the Falls](#)
- [Wild Cantor](#)

Bert (5 life):

- 6 [Forest](#)
- 4 [Swamp](#)
- [Dripping-Tongue Zuberu](#)
- [Mortipede](#) (tapped)
- [Pithing Needle](#) (naming [Scorched Rusalka](#))
- [Revenant Patriarch](#)
- [Silhana Ledgewalker](#) (tapped)
- [Gelectrode](#) (cast on his previous turn)

Your Hand:

- [Drowned Rusalka](#)
- [Island](#)
- [Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)
- [Rain of Embers](#)
- [Surge of Zeal](#)
- [Tin Street Hooligan](#)



You have no cards in your graveyard, and 37 cards left in your deck (none relevant). It is your first main phase.

Bert has no cards in hand, and no relevant cards in his graveyard.

Puzzle 1c:

You are up against your arch nemesis: mad genius Kate Grimbolt. You were initially a bit disappointed when she did not bring some wacky combination deck to the table. After all, you were prepared to win with quick beatdown via [Tin Street Hooligan](#) and Genjus. You were short on luck, though, since Kate's deck was full of creatures able to blunt your assault. Undeterred, you changed course, settled in for the long game, and are now poised to win the game this very turn.

In Play:



You (2 life):

- 9 [Island](#)
- 1 [Izzet Boilerworks](#)
- 1 [Mountain](#), enchanted with [Genju of the Spires](#)
- 1 [Steam Vents](#) (tapped), enchanted with [Genju of the Falls](#)

Kate (4 life):

- 6 [Forest](#)
- 4 [Swamp](#)
- [Dripping-Tongue Zuberu](#)
- [Mortipede](#) (tapped)
- [Pithing Needle](#) (naming [Drowned Rusalka](#))
- [Revenant Patriarch](#)
- [Silhana Ledgewalker](#) (tapped)
- [Wild Cantor](#)

Your Hand:

- [Drowned Rusalka](#)
- [Gelectrode](#)
- [Island](#)
- [Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)
- [Rain of Embers](#)
- [Surge of Zeal](#)
- [Tin Street Hooligan](#)

You have no cards in your graveyard, and 37 cards left in your deck (none relevant). It is your first main phase.

Kate has no cards in hand, and no relevant cards in her graveyard.

Puzzle 1d:

You are up against your arch nemesis: mad genius Meg Tarotbilk. You were initially a bit disappointed when she did not bring some wacky combination deck to the table. After all, you were prepared to win with quick beatdown via [Tin Street Hooligan](#) and Genjus. You were short on luck, though, since Meg's deck was full of creatures able to blunt your assault. Undeterred, you changed course, settled in for the long game, and are now poised to win this game this very turn.

In Play:

You (2 life):

- 5 [Island](#), 1 of which is enchanted with [Genju of the Falls](#)
- 1 [Izzet Boilerworks](#)
- 1 [Mountain](#), enchanted with [Genju of the Spires](#)
- 1 [Steam Vents](#)

Meg (7 life):

- 6 [Forest](#)
- 4 [Swamp](#)



[Dripping-Tongue Zuberu](#)

[Mortipede](#) (tapped)

[Pithing Needle](#) (naming [Drowned Rusalka](#))

[Revenant Patriarch](#)

[Silhana Ledgewalker](#) (tapped)

[Wild Cantor](#)

Your Hand:

[Drowned Rusalka](#)

[Gelectrode](#)

[Mountain](#)

[Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)

[Rain of Embers](#)

[Surge of Zeal](#)

[Tin Street Hooligan](#)

You have no cards in your graveyard, and 37 cards left in your deck (none relevant). It is your first main phase.

Meg has no cards in hand, and no relevant cards in her graveyard.

Part II: Ideas Unbound



By this point we're well aware that if The Izzet were a **Magic** card persona, they'd all be a bunch of Johnnies. The colors Blue/Red even have a history of producing infinite combos. Consider such recent interactions as [Intruder Alarm](#)/Kiki-Jiki, or [Izzet Guildmage](#)/[Lava Spike](#)/[Desperate Ritual](#). Of course as every Johnny knows, the most rewarding combos are the ones that are the most difficult to achieve.

Puzzle 2:

Your game against Mandark was going about as well as you might have hoped after he managed to

Cranial [Extract](#) most of the win conditions from your deck. In fact, with [Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#) in play and a grip full of counters, your odds looked pretty decent, so you made a risky play and cast [Djinn Illuminatus](#), just to tighten the screws a little. Unfortunately, while your mana was mostly tapped, Mandark went into hyper combo-mode and gained an arbitrarily large amount of life. Suddenly your counters do not look so impressive. Can you kill Mandark before [Underworld Dreams](#) kills you?

In Play:

You (1 life):

6 [Island](#)

3 [Izzet Boilerworks](#)

3 [Mountain](#)

[Djinn Illuminatus](#)

[Izzet Guildmage](#)

[Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)

Mandark (141,000,000 life):

2 [Island](#)

6 [Forest](#)

1 [Swamp](#)

[Heartbeat of Spring](#)

[Underworld Dreams](#)

Your Hand:

[Frazzle](#)

[Gigadrowse](#)

[Remand](#)

[Rewind](#)

[Runeboggle](#)

You have no cards in your graveyard and it is your first main phase.

The only cards left in your deck are [Induce Paranoia](#), [Stream of Consciousness](#), and 2 [Islands](#).

Mandark had no relevant cards in his hand or graveyard.



Part III: Battle Royale

More than anything else, The Izzet love to experiment. Whether the experiment succeeds or fails, The Izzet are generally content, since the pursuit of knowledge is their ultimate goal. And like the chemists of the past, who would taste their own compounds and occasionally suffer dire consequences, The Izzet are not afraid to use themselves as test subjects. As evidence, consider the excerpt below, unearthed in The Izzet scientific archives.

Question: What is the best guild in Ravnica?

Hypothesis: The Izzet are the best guild in Ravnica.

Experimental Plan: Compare The Izzet again each of the other 9 guilds one at a time, using the following criteria:



1. Assign The Izzet to player A, and the competing guild to player B.
2. Start each player at 1000 life.
3. Put each permanent from each guild into play under their control of their respective players.
 1. Put any comes-into-play abilities on the stack in the usual fashion.
 2. All creatures have haste.
 3. Attach any auras to the targets of the guild player's choice.
 4. Any other choices (such as whether the dual lands will come into play tapped or not) must be made by each player in turn.
4. Put each guild instant or sorcery into that player's hand.
5. Fill each player's library with an unlimited amount of basic land(s) of their choice (in the order they choose).
6. Put player A in their first main phase. They must deal as much damage to Player B this turn as possible.
7. **Reset** the game conditions, and put player B in their first main phase. They must deal as much damage to Player A this turn as possible.
8. The player whose life total is lowered less on their opponent's turn is considered the "better" guild.

Test Case #1: The Izzet vs the Gruul clan.

Notes: Gruul creatures do not have their Bloodthirst enabled. The off-color comes-into-play abilities are not enhanced (since no mana was spent on the creatures). The **Karoo**lands (e.g. **Izzet Boilerworks**) still come into play tapped.

Unfortunately, that's the end of the notes. What was the result of the battle royale between The Izzet and the Gruul clan?

For reference, here is a list of The Izzet cards:

Permanents:

- [Djinn Illuminatus](#)
- [Gelectrode](#)
- [Goblin Flectomancer](#)
- [Hypervolt Grasp](#)
- [Izzet Boilerworks](#)
- [Izzet Chronarch](#)
- [Izzet Guildmage](#)
- [Izzet Signet](#)
- [Mizzium Transreliquat](#)
- [Nivix, Aerie of the Firemind](#)
- [Niv-Mizzet, the Firemind](#)
- [Ogre Savant](#)
- [Petrahydrox](#)
- [Steamcore Weird](#)



- [Steam Vents](#)
- [Tibor and Lumia](#)
- [Torch Drake](#)
- [Wee Dragonauts](#)

Spells:

- [Cerebral Vortex](#)
- [Electrolyze](#)
- [Gigadrowse](#)
- [Invoke the Firemind](#)
- [Leap of Flame](#)
- [Mimeofacture](#)
- [Pyromatics](#)
- [Schismotivate](#)
- [Shattering Spree](#)
- [Siege of Towers](#)
- [Stitch in Time](#) (assume your flip will fail)
- [Thunderheads](#)
- [Train of Thought](#)
- [Vacuumelt](#)

Gruul cards:



Permanents:

- [Battering Wurm](#)
- [Bloodscale Prowler](#)
- [Borborygmos](#)
- [Burning-Tree Bloodscale](#)
- [Burning-Tree Shaman](#)

- [Feral Animist](#)
- [Ghor-Clan Bloodscale](#)
- [Ghor-Clan Savage](#)
- [Giant Solifuge](#)
- [Gristleback](#)
- [Gruul Nodorog](#)
- [Gruul Scrapper](#)
- [Gruul Guildmage](#)
- [Gruul Signet](#)
- [Gruul Turf](#)
- [Gruul War Plow](#)
- [Killer Instinct](#)
- [Petrified Wood-Kin](#)
- [Rabble-Rouser](#)
- [Rumbling Slum](#)
- [Scab-Clan Mauler](#)
- [Skarrg, the Rage Pits](#)
- [Skarrgan Firebird](#)
- [Skarrgan Pit-Skulk](#)
- [Skarrgan Skybreaker](#)
- [Stomping Ground](#)
- [Streetbreaker Wurm](#)
- [Tin Street Hooligan](#)
- [Ulasht, the Hate Seed](#)
- [Wild Cantor](#)

Spells:

- [Savage Twister](#)
- [Wreak Havoc](#)

Answers will be posted on Wednesday. Once again, I thank Justin Sarnak for his help in testing the puzzles. Until then, enjoy all of the new guilds, but especially The Izzet.