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Ask Wizards
Monday, April 3, 2006

Ask Wizards - April, 2006

Do you have a question about **Magic: The Gathering** or *Wizards of the Coast*? Send it, along with your name and location, to us via this [email form](#). We'll post a new question and answer each day.

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April 28, 2006

Q: "Stealing opponents' cards seems to classically be red and blue effects, with red stealing on a temporary basis (**Threaten**) and blue stealing on a permanent basis (**Confiscate**). With that in mind, it's surprising that the Izzet didn't get any stealing cards. Was this intentional?"
--Matthew
Dublin, Ireland

A: From **Devin Low, Magic R&D:**

"Ahoy Matthew,

"A vital element in Ravnica Block design was is that each guild embodies a specific aspect of its two-color combination, not every aspect of its two-color combination. On the *Guildpact* design team, the first crucial challenge for Mike Elliott, Aaron Forsythe, Brian Schneider and myself was to spend many hours suggesting and debating different aspects of RG, WB, and UR to emphasize in our guilds.

"For example, as a two-color combination, Green-Red has a long history of accelerated land destruction. Our RG guild *could* have emphasized that part of Red-Green. But instead we chose to emphasize the way that Green-Red loves to fight, loves to attack, loves to cause damage, and loves to use little beaters to pave the way for huge game-enders - in essence: The Gruul.

"Since Blue and Red share stealing, we *could* have emphasized stealing mechanics in Blue-Red to create a very different guild. Instead we focused on the overlap between Blue loving instants, Red loving sorceries, and both being the primary 'spell colors' of **Magic**. Personally, I enjoy replicating **Train of Thought** for 5 cards, or sending **Wee Dragonauts** for 7 damage. I enjoy activating **Izzet Guildmage** on just about anything! Yup, the Izzet are my favorite guild in the block."

April 27, 2006

Q: "I was just wondering what the definition of a 'plane' was. For example, is Ravnica a big round planet, or does it have edges like Earth did before Columbus errata'ed it?"
--Ryan
Manchester, UK

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

"The only consistency across all planes is their infinite variety, Ryan. Some planes are entire, boundless universes containing multiple worlds. Others are simply one world and its sky, with the planar matter simply ending at some altitude above the surface. Planes can be of any shape or size, and they follow their own rules of physics. Mirrodin, for example, is an artificial plane of the planeswalker Karn's creation. It's a hollow metal world with an internal 'sun' of pure mana. Rath was another artificial plane (before it was laid over the world of Dominaria like a skin), formed from a combination of the Phyrexian mimetic metal flowstone and pieces taken from other planes. In contrast, the plane of Kamigawa is a natural plane but has two interdependent realities: the kakuriyo and utsushiyo (the realm of the kami and the realm of mortals). The possibilities for planar structures are endless . . . and we wouldn't have it any other way."

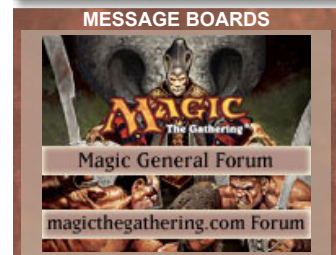
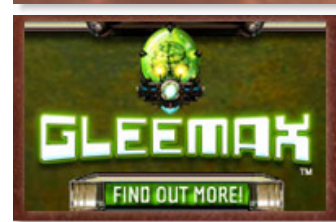
April 26, 2006

Q: "When 'cantrips' originally came out (in the *Ice Age* Block) they had you draw a card on the next upkeep. Then cards came out allowing you to draw a card as soon as the spell resolved and people were still calling them 'cantrips', although they are very different (in my opinion). What went into the decision to change how cantrips work?"
--Dave

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

"Hi Dave,

"Many people think cantrips changed to make it less likely that you forget to draw your card, and then ask four turns later if you could draw that forgotten card. The real reason was that at the time we were considering



removing the upkeep phase from the game, and therefore needed to remove the reference to upkeep from cantrips. Our polling at the time revealed these statistics:

Favorite Phase in Magic (1000 players polled)

301	Second Main Phase
223	Combat Phase
212	Discard/Cleanup Phase
99	Draw Phase
71	Untap Phase
56	No Answer
37	First Main Phase
1	Upkeep

"In spite of these numbers we decided not to remove upkeep from **Magic**, at the time, but knew we would eventually have to. It is unlikely that upkeep will still be a part of **Magic** by early 2007.

"(Or, if you don't believe that, maybe it really did have something to do with a mandatory draw that didn't happen right away, and thus caused rules issues when it wasn't noticed until turns later. Your choice.)"

April 25, 2006



Q: "Hello. I was reading Brian David-Marshall's article, '[From Humble Beginnings](#),' and noticed the **Crystalline Sliver** in the picture of all the Friday Night Magic promo cards. What is the story behind this card since it is much harder to come by than the other FNM cards?"

--David
Green Isle, MN, USA

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, **Magic** R&D:

"Maybe I'm not supposed to even tell this story, but whatever. You asked.

"**Crystalline Sliver** was slated to be an FNM prize a few years back (the collector number implies it would have been for March 2003, right between **Muscle Sliver** and **Capsize**). Someone managed to pull off a heist of several sleeves of them before they could be distributed, most of which were eventually recovered. However, enough went missing that we didn't have quite enough to use the card as an FNM prize.

"We still have lots of them here tucked away, and may eventually distribute them somehow."

April 24, 2006



Q: "I realize this is digging up some old cards, but was there a reason that **Bad Moon** and **Crusade** had the same effect in different colors, but were costed differently? It's always bothered me..."

--David
Bloomington, IN

A: From **Robert Gutschera**, **Magic** R&D:

"Good question David. There's a general answer and a specific answer. The general answer is that each color is good at some things, 'just okay' at some things, and terrible at some things. So, for example, Red is good at direct damage. When we decided to make a green direct damage spell (**Unyaro Bee Sting**) we made it cost more, to represent that green was not good at direct damage. On further thought, we decided green was so bad at direct damage it shouldn't be able to do it at all, and we stopped making green direct damage like that entirely! So, it's not uncommon to have something cost one amount in one color, and a different amount in another.

"The specific answer is tougher. If you think about it, white is the color that should be best at having all its creatures work as a team. So shouldn't **Crusade** cost less than **Bad Moon**, instead of more? The answer, I'm afraid, is lost in the mists of time. I asked Richard Garfield, and he said he didn't remember now how it came about. So in the end, despite all the fancy reasons we might be able to come up with today, maybe it's best to just say it's a historical quirk, and leave it at that! (And, for what it's worth, it's always bothered me a bit too.)"

April 21, 2006



Q: "When cards are designed, they are tested to make sure they aren't too powerful, right? I read that **Scythe of the Wretched** used to give +2/+1, but had the toughness boost increased to prevent a two-card win with **Triskelion**. The rule I heard was that the designers try to not print cards that can generate a two-card instant win. With that in mind, when **Flame Fusillade** was designed, was the combo with **Time Vault** discovered? If so, why didn't this apply to the rule? Does the combo have to be Standard-legal to disqualify a card because of two-card 'I win' combos?"

--Sam
Oakland, California, USA

A: From **Mark Gottlieb**, **Magic** Rules Manager:

"Sam, you're right about the effort we take to avoid game-ending 2-card combos. But no one in R&D saw the **Time Vault-Flame Fusillade**

combo. There are a few reasons for that. 1) We generally limit our degenerate combo search to Standard, and maybe Extended if something jumps out at us. There are so many thousands of cards that we can't do an exhaustive search, so Legacy combos aren't a priority. 2) For the sake of our sanity, we generally ignore the very existence of **Time Vault**. 3) **Time Vault** doesn't work like it's supposed to work, so none of us anticipated anything like this combo.

"(For those who don't know, here's the combo: **Flame Fusillade** grants your permanents the ability '{T}: Deal 1 damage to target creature or player.' **Time Vault** is an artifact with (among other abilities) 'Skip your next turn: Untap **Time Vault** and put a time counter on it.' So you could play **Flame Fusillade**, then tap **Time Vault** to deal damage, untap it by skipping your next turn, tap it, untap it, tap it, and so on. By the time you're done, you'll have skipped your next 20 turns, but your opponent will be fried to a crisp and in no real position to take advantage of your generosity.)

"But wait—didn't I just say that the way **Time Vault** works is wrong? There are two problems with it. One is the cost of this activated ability. A cost can be spending mana, or paying life, or discarding a card, or various other resources you can spend. But a cost can't really be spending something you don't have yet. **Magic doesn't have a concept of debt**. Look at **Chronatog**—It was printed with 'skip your next turn' as a cost, but that was changed in Oracle long ago so it's now part of the ability's effect. **Time Vault** should have been changed at the same time but wasn't.

"The other issue is the original intent of its untap ability. Check out this ability from a different Vault in Alpha: '**Mana Vault** doesn't untap normally during untap phase; to untap it, you must pay 4 mana.' **Mana Vault's** Oracle wording treats this ability like so: 'At the beginning of your upkeep, you may pay {4}. If you do, untap **Mana Vault**.' This reflects the clear intent of the ability. Untapping this card at the beginning of your turn costs extra mana. You get to do it once, since it's this card's functional substitute for the 'normal' untap. Having this ability trigger at the beginning of your upkeep is the modern treatment of this sort of thing.

"These reasons are why **Time Vault** (as well as **Brass Man**, **Colossus of Sardia**, and **Island Fish Jasconius**) have all been given errata in the latest Oracle update (which goes live on Monday) to restore the original intent and functionality of their untap abilities. They'll all be upkeep-triggered abilities that you can use once per turn. (**Black Carriage** and **Marjhan** aren't getting the same errata because they were only ever printed with the activated version of their untap abilities.)

"This means the **Flame Fusillade-Time Vault** combo will no longer work. However, this change was not done to kill the combo. In fact, the existence of the combo is rather irrelevant. If a combo occurs naturally and is degenerate, our response would be to ban one of the cards, not change its functionality. But in this case, **Time Vault** and **Flame Fusillade** should never have interacted this way. Through years of Oracle changes and rules system changes, **Time Vault** drifted away from working the way it's supposed to. It's being changed because it's the right thing to do for the integrity of that card."



April 20, 2006

Q: "Is there a particular order on how you decide who will be the commentators for the Pro Tour live webcasts on Sundays? I noticed for a while it was Randy Buehler and Mike Flores, but, more recently BDM was a commentator. Is the Brian Hacker/Randy Buehler team long gone?"

--Jacob
Springfield, Ohio, USA

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

"We used to grab whatever players with colorful personalities had already been eliminated from the tournament. Brian Weissman and Chris Pikula were the most used commentators for a while back in the mid-late '90's, and I got added to the play-by-play rotation when Weissman fell off the Tour. Similarly, Hacker replaced Pikula as the go-to color commentator once Pikula stopped playing as regularly. After that, Brian Kibler then more or less replaced Hacker.

"Nowadays we do things a little differently. As our webcasts have gotten to be a bigger and bigger deal, we've been trying to make them more professional. We're drawing a slightly thicker line between PT competitors and journalists, and we aren't scrambling to find commentators at the last minute based on who did and did not make the Top 8 anymore. The idea is to create a class of professional journalists/commentators who get really good at covering **Magic**, studying their craft and improving at it because coverage is the aspect of the game they specialize in. Obviously many of our players have awesome personalities and add lots of great color to our coverage, and that's why we will continue to get their voices into our coverage at every available opportunity (via interviews, podcasts, etc.).

"You can check out our latest work throughout Pro Tour Prague May 5-7. The podcast is a great way to hear the players themselves talking about what's going on. Then the Sunday webcast will feature me on play-by-play and Brian David-Marshall on color."

April 19, 2006

Q: "The more I read about the flavor of black, the less I understand the reason behind the limitations on cards like **Fear** and **Terror**. Black, in its search for power for itself, epitomizes willingness to harm those similar to oneself. It seems that, more than any other color, black things should promote infighting with other black things

(perhaps white things should be likely to have protection from white/unblockability by white creatures/inability to target white creatures with negative spells, promoting harmony within the group). Is there a justification for this odd twist of the color pie, or is it just the sort of thing one has to expect when early stabs at color restrictions result in oft-reprinted abilities which are sometimes out of flavor?"

--Kelsey, Rochester USA

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

"Kelsey,

"The reason that **Terror** does not destroy black creatures has nothing to do with black's unwillingness to harm fellow black creatures. (In contrast, when we use "non-white" in white we are going for this flavor.) Black has trouble destroying black creatures because of their nature. Lets take **Terror** as the example. The idea behind the card is that you are scaring a creature to death. Black creatures just don't scare that easily. (Or artifact creatures for that matter.) Black's inability to destroy black creatures is treated by R&D designwise (and black flavorwise) as a weakness of black. Black would love to be able to efficiently destroy other black creatures. That it can't is a great frustration. The best black mages learn how to work around the limitation. (Hello -1/-1 counters.)"

April 18, 2006



Q: "Do Invitational cards have any policy that prevents them from being reprinted? It'd be awesome to see **Shadowmage Infiltrator**, **Meddling Mage** and **Solemn Simulacrum** back in action."

--Digs

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

"Digs,

"Is there a policy? No.

"Oh wait, you're still here. Okay, I guess I can go into a little more detail. Invitational cards have the same restrictions as any **Magic** card, no more, no less. While so far we've only reprinted two Invitational cards (**Meddling Mage** and **Voidmage Prodigy**, both as promos), it is mere happenstance that no other ones have been reprinted yet. So much so that I will use this Ask Wizards answer to boldly predict that one day we will reprint an Invitational card. What the heck, I'll boldly predict we'll print more than one. (You know, as long as I'm boldly predicting.) It's just a matter of time."

April 17, 2006



Q: "I'm sure you've been bombarded with the following question already, but you guys know you spelled 'Dissension' wrong, don't you? Or was that on purpose?"

---- Fabian

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

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

"Actually, Fabian, you're the first to ask this question. It's very disappointing, really. 'Difficult to spell' is the most important consideration that goes into selecting Magic set names. In my opinion, *Dissension* just didn't have enough potential misspellings to make the cut. 'Dissention' is the alternative spelling listed in the dictionary, but what else can you do with this one? It's like *Prophecy* and *Judgment* all over again!

"Ah, for the glory days of *Mercadian Masques* or *Odyssey*. Now those could really make people look ridiculous on message boards! And it's not just the fans who get to join in the fun! The typeset cards for *Apocalypse* were saved under the file name 'Apocolypse,' and the company went so far as to trademark 'Nemesis.'"

April 14, 2006



Q: "Where did the splendid Draft Viewer go? It was featured in the coverage of pro tour London 2005...and drafting (along with thinking to myself, 'yep, I'm the BEST, it's just I wasn't there...') is fun!"

--Martin

Munich, Germany

A: From **Greg Collins, magicthegathering.com** event coverage producer:

"Hi Martin --

"We're not ashamed to say that we think the [Draft Viewer](#) is one of the coolest bells and whistles we've added to the site in awhile. Unfortunately, we haven't had a Limited Pro Tour since London! That problem is solved at Pro Tour-Prague on May 5-7, when the entire *Ravnica* block will be drafted by the best players in the world.

We'll be bringing you at least the Top 8 draft in Draft Viewer form, along with a complete analysis of the draft. If you want to get a leg up on how to draft the whole block, be sure to tune in to the event coverage. You can also expect to see the Viewer show up in the return of Limited Information column, where we'll be experimenting with all sorts of ways to review drafts."



April 13, 2006



Q: "Is there a conscious effort to avoid adhering too closely to 'real world' animal classifications, in the same

way that real world references are avoided in flavor text? The [February 9th question](#) brought up **Giant Solifuge**, but as a whole there are quite a few generalizations in terms of creature types. I understand that it isn't necessarily in the best interests of the game to create a lot of 'one of' creature types (like Octopus), but is there an attempt to generalize things as 'Magic Insects'? Some others I can think of are **Horseshoe Crab**, which is actually a chelicerate (as are arachnids). **Bane of the Living**, **Clickslither**, **Ferropede**, **Gigapede**, **Lithophage**, and **Mortipede** all seem to be closer to myriapods (centipedes and millipedes). **Plague Fiend** seems rather solphugid-like, and **Gleancrawler** seems more like a crustacean. Also, is the decision of creature type made before the artwork is commissioned, or based to some degree on abilities and the art?"
--Ryan, USA

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

"Big question, Ryan. Creature types are tricky; they're the one creative element on a card for which there's a direct mechanical function. In all other parts of the card, the mechanical aspects and the creative aspects operate more or less independently; not so with creature types.

"To me your question is really about where to draw the line on a particular creature type. For example, maybe Hound and Wolf could be unified under a Dog type. Or maybe all Hounds, Wolves, Hyenas, Jackals, Dingos, and Foxes could be unified under a Canine type. Then, if you've got Canine, you could have Feline, Bovine, Ursine, Equine, Ovine, and Porcine. And then you could have Primates, Cetaceans, Rodents, Ungulates . . . aw, heck, how about just a Mammal type? I'm joking, of course, but the point is that we don't want too much taxonomical complexity or too many scientific terms in **Magic**. Whether or not a particular made-up creature such as a Gargadon gets lumped in with Beasts or gets something more specialized depends on many factors, not the least of which is its overall coolness.

"As for the second part of your question, artwork often influences the decision about a creature's type, mechanics less often. But when mechanics do have influence, they exert a strong influence. Some examples are Spider, Shade, Specter, Sliver, and Slith (hey, why do they all begin with "S"?)."

April 12, 2006



Q: "There is an advertisement for *Guildpact* that pops up in a banner on AdultSwim.com sometimes. I was wondering what the art was on that banner because, though it looks like Gruul, it doesn't look like it comes from any cards I know of."
--Zac, USA

A: From **Andy Smith**, Assistant Brand Manager:

"Hi Zac,

"The piece you're asking about is actually a custom painting we had done just for that ad. We often commission new artwork to match the message of our advertising. With the *Ravnica* set, for example, we wanted to highlight the quantity of gold cards, so we decided to do a spread of creatures. However, if we just cut and paste from the card art we'd end up with a jumble of different art styles and poses, so we commissioned Greg Staples to give the ad a cohesive appearance. Click here to see a nice big version of it:



"Now that you've seen the *Ravnica* piece, here's the *Guildpact* piece you asked about."



April 11, 2006



Q: "What is the flavor reason behind making lands like *Duskmantle*, *House of Shadow*, *Sunhome*, *Fortress of the Legion*, *Svogthos*, the *Restless Tomb*, and *Vitu-Ghazi*, the *City-Tree* non-Legendary? They seem legendary to me, and all the other cards from pre-*Ravnica* of the form '*name, the subtitle*' are legendary."

--Ryun

Atlanta, GA, USA

A: From **Scott Johns**, **Magicthegathering.com** Producer:

"We've been receiving versions of this pretty much non-stop since *Ravnica*. Though it's been pointed out several times in the boards, given how much we still get this question I figured I'd take a stab at quelling the tide. Anyone looking for the answer to this question need only read the Ask Wizards by [Brady Dommermuth](#) back on [Sept. 4, 2003](#): 'One recent development in this area [mana's flavor relationship with the game] has to do with legendary lands. It used to be that any unique place would be considered legendary for card purposes, whether it was a single structure or an entire city. We decided recently that unique places should be able to accommodate more than one mage's bond. Theoretically that means you could start seeing more unique places on nonlegendary land cards. This doesn't mean we won't print legendary lands anymore; such lands will simply be conceptualized as places that can support a bond with only one mage.'"

April 10, 2006



Q: "I'm curious about why you issue errata on some cards but not others when the rules are changed. For example, all of the old Wall creatures have received the Defender ability through errata. Yet *Norritt* and similar cards still refer to non-Wall creatures, rather than creatures without Defender. As matters currently stand, *Norritt* could use its ability to destroy *Souls of the Faultless*. Is this change in functionality to old cards intentional? I guess my bigger question is: how is errata in general handled for this kind of thing?"

--Eric

Lincoln, NE, USA

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

"Eric,

"What to do about 'old' or 'outdated' creature types has been a long-running debate within R&D, but the good news is I think we've finally got a good plan. We are currently in the middle of reviewing every single creature type in Oracle and updating them to match modern conventions. Among other things, this means all the old legends will finally get 'real' creature types (Legendary Creature – [blank] is kind of lame, etc.). It will take us a while to do all that updating, so in the short-term we are updating types as we need them. For example, whenever we release an old set on *Magic Online*, part of the process is to update all the creature types, or whenever we reprint a card (like in *Ninth Edition*), we update the creature type. So, for example, since [Visions goes on sale](#) on *Magic Online* starting today, all of the cards in *Visions* got immediate attention.)

"As far as the rules for cards go, the general answer to your question is that our rules manager is constantly updating Oracle and fixing any problems that he finds. People rarely notice any changes, because they are usually really small tweaks, or only "matter" once in a blue moon. Occasionally we'll do something that is a big enough deal for people to notice, though. For example, reprinting *Mirage* on *Magic Online* drew a lot of attention to the commons that did not interact well with 'Sixth Edition rules.' Another example of this was when we introduced the keyword 'defender' so that none of our creature types would carry inherent rules baggage with them. The Wall/Defender thing was tricky for a number of reasons. We decided to keep 'wall' as a supported creature type but we also decided that not all defenders would be walls. We will still print the occasional wall, and whatever walls we do print will almost certainly have defender, but obviously we're also going to print a bunch of defenders that are not walls. This policy left us in a tricky position when it came to old cards that interacted with walls. In most cases we decided to leave them alone – there are still walls for them to interact with so they still do. That gives us a few corner cases that some people may find odd, like *Norritt* vs. *Souls of the Faultless*, but I can assure you that we looked at all those cards and decided case by case whether it was better to leave it alone or issue errata."

April 7, 2006



Q: "Why does 'To Arms!' have an exclamation point? Not counting 'Un' sets, I don't think any other cards have punctuation like this. What made this one special?"

--Christian

Germany, Baden-Württemberg

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

"Christian,

"**To Arms!** Is not the first un-*Un* card to use an exclamation point. **Kaboom!** from *Onslaught* had one as well. In the case of both of these cards, the names do not describe what the spell is, like '**Fireball**,' or what it does, like '**Discombobulate**.' Instead, they are emphatic references to the before and after effects of each spell. **Kaboom!** describes the sound (or, in some cases, sounds) that take place after the spell goes off. **To Arms!** Is the sound of the rallying call that rings out before the spell goes off. In each case, the name is trying to engage you, the player, in the excitement of the moment either before or after the spell. When I chose the name for **To Arms!**, I really hoped people would see it not just as the card name, but also as their own rallying cry, barking out '**To Arms!**' as they cast the spell, then untapping their forces and taking down marauding foes."

April 6, 2006



Q: "Would you say that Blue has an iconic creature?"

--Michael

Forli, Italy

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

"I don't think blue has an iconic creature right now, Michael, although we're working on it. On the 'big and rare' front, white has Angels, black has Demons, red has Dragons . . . but blue and green are a little bit left out in the cold. On the small end of the creature curve, it's blue and white that are left out (Goblins, Elves, and Zombies can play the role in red, green, and black).

"In a way it's appropriate that blue is thinnest when it comes to iconic creatures, because blue's creatures are generally not as strong as the other colors. That doesn't mean we're not working to find some 'poster children' for blue, though."

April 5, 2006



Q: "Is there a cardlist or checklist for the Pro Tour Player cards?"

--Harley, USA

A: From **Aaron Forsythe, Magic R&D:**

"Not yet, Harley, but I'll type one here just for you! (And then, through the magic of the Internet, our web team will add it to the [player card web page!](#))

1. Tim Aten
2. José Barbero
3. Kai Budde
4. Pierre Canali
5. Kamiel Cornelissen
6. Antonino De Rosa
7. Murray Evans
8. Tsuyoshi Fujita
9. Eugene Harvey
10. Dave Humpherys
11. Itaru Ishida
12. Anton Jonsson
13. Brian Kibler
14. Masashiro Kuroda
15. Osyp Lebedowicz
16. Raphaël Lévy
17. Bob Maher
18. Masahiko Morita
19. Gabriel Nassif
20. Julien Nuijten
21. Masashi Oiso
22. Jeroen Remie
23. Antoine Ruel
24. Olivier Ruel
25. Terry Soh

"Look for another batch of player cards--including the five members of the Pro Tour Hall of Fame--in *Time Spiral*."

April 4, 2006



Q: "I have noticed that numerous flavour texts reveal the names of the guildmages. Do all the guildmages printed so far now have names?"

--John
Adelaide, SA, Australia

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

"All of Ravnica's guilds have far more than one guildmage, John. Each guildmage named in flavor text is just one of many of that guild's mages, and there isn't a piece of flavor text attributed to a guildmage for each of the ten guilds."

April 3, 2006



Q: "What went into the decision to not bring back some of the more obscure older multicolor cards for *Ravnica*? The Golgari recieved **Dark Heart of the Wood** and the Gruul got **Savage Twister**. Why not give all the guilds throwback cards like **Diabolic Vision** for the Dimir or **Hymn of Rebirth** for the Selesnya?"

--Shane
Louisville, KY, USA

A: From **Devin Low**, **Magic** R&D:

"Hey Shane,

"A fine question. **Dark Heart of the Wood** and **Savage Twister** were put into the block to be awesome one-ofs, not to create a structured cycle of gold reprints. Without a cycle to provide political cover, any proposed gold reprint had to live or die on its own merits. And it was important that any gold reprint fit its guild as well as the new gold cards did. **Dark Heart of the Wood** fit perfectly the Golgari theme of sacrificing resources for benefits (then probably recurring them). **Savage Twister** was added by *Guildpact* Development as a synergistic combination of Gruul's red burn and green fat, to provide a red-green 'wrath' effect for Block Constructed.

"**Hymn of Rebirth** is a green-white **Zombify** that can hit any player's graveyard – not a good fit for token-loving Selesnya. **Diabolic Vision** on the other hand, a library manipulation spell, does fit the theme of Dimir. However, **Diabolic Vision** is way less well-known than **Dark Heart** or **Savage Twister**, and therefore less exciting. It was never seriously considered for Ravnica. We were also excited about doing **Telling Time**, and the two cards are too similar to do in the same set."



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