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# Ask Wizards - May, 2006

Ask Wizards  
Monday, May 1, 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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## May 31, 2006

**Q:** Is the rumor true that Jeremy Cranford is leaving Wizards of the Coast? If so, do you know who's replacing him yet?  
--Michael  
Carlisle, PA

**A:** From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:  
Yes, Jeremy Cranford has left his position as Art Director for **Magic**. The game came a long way under Cranford's leadership and we're definitely sad to see him go, but he decided he was at a point in his life where he wanted to pursue new opportunities and we wish him the best of luck with those opportunities.

The good news for us is that we already had a guy on staff who is the perfect replacement for Cranford: Jeremy Jarvis. You can read more about Jarvis in [today's Arcana](#), but here's the short version: Jarvis totally gets **Magic**, his concept illustrations and his own art are top notch, and he has integrated himself into our creative team so successfully in the year since he arrived that we were already looking for ways to give him more responsibility even before Cranford decided to leave. The one thing you can't read there is that his personality is really well suited to dealing with artists – he knows how important it is to give artists as much room to be creative as possible, but at the same time he knows how important it is that **Magic** art fit into that year's world and match the card it is on. I think he'll be really good at walking that line and I have no doubt that **Magic** art will continue to kick ass under Jarvis's leadership.

## May 30, 2006

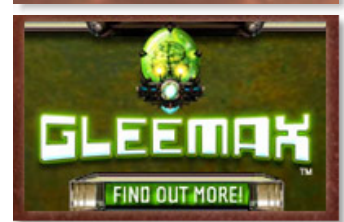
**Q:** Now that *Ravnica*, *Guildpact*, and *Dissension* are all out, are we going to find out what those passages of blacked out text were in Mark Rosewater's 10/3/05 column "[Getting your Philosophy](#)" were, or are those secrets about how the *Ravnica* block will interact with the *Time Spiral* (Snap/Crackle/Pop) block? Will there ever be a time you can reveal that info?  
--Paul  
Aiken, SC

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** Head Designer:  
Paul,  
There were two blacked out sections. The second section named the guilds in *Guildpact* and *Dissension*. The first section has to stay secret. The most annoying thing is that I can't even tell you why I can't tell you. I can say though that it is about something bigger than just the *Ravnica* block. When the day comes that I can tell you, I will. I obviously can't tell you when that would be. But thanks for checking in. I do enjoy when my readers remind me of things I said that at the time I couldn't talk about because when I am able to share old secrets I do so happily.

## May 26, 2006

**Q:** Can you tell us some of the cards that received 5.0s on your Limited points scales, especially from recent sets? I'm curious how many cards ever get perfect scores from you guys.  
--Kenneth  
Renton, Washington, USA

**A:** From **Matt Place**, **Magic** R&D:  
Hi Kenneth,  
Good question. For readers not familiar with the term "pointing" I'm going to point out the articles [Limited Pointing](#) by Randy Buehler and [Pointing Out the Obvious](#) by Aaron Forsythe, which should get them up to speed.  
There has been an interesting evolution of the "perfect 5.0" Limited card since magic was first released. In our current Limited environments the 5.0 cards are almost always colorless, like *Masticore* and *Jitte*. But when I played tournaments in the early 90's (yes, I'm extremely old) colored cards could receive a perfect Limited score. *Fireball* is a great example. Your blue/white deck was significantly stronger with one *Fireball* and two



mountains. Since then the speed of Limited has accelerated to the point where you can no longer expect to draw 70% of your deck in the average game. So to answer your question, the only cards we have given a perfect limited score to in recent history are both colorless, one is the Jitte and the other is of course **Bronze Bombshell**. *[Editor's note: Yes, Matt is messing with you on that last one, as always. For once I'm going to just say it right here to see if I can stem the colossal tide of email Matt seems to love generating with his Ask Wizards answers!]*

May 25, 2006



**Q:** When I was following the reports from Pro Tour-Prague I noticed many players saying Selesnya was a bad guild for the *Ravnica/Guildpact/Dissension* draft environment. As R&D members, when you guys read that kind of thing do you feel you made a mistake or just accept you can't balance everything perfectly so it is good in every format?

--Bart

Enschede, Netherlands

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

We considered a lot of things when decided how to spread out the guilds. The dynamics of booster draft was definitely one of our considerations, but it wasn't the only one. The common complaint about Selesnya when drafting the full block is that it's a "dead-end path." Specifically, if you assume you want a 3-color deck with one guild from each set then you can't start out with Selesnya. It would put you in either Orzhov or Gruul in *Guildpact* and then all 3 *Dissension* guilds would require you to add a color.

I don't think this is a bad thing. In fact, I actually think it's kind of cool that there's this unwanted guild where the good cards slide later into the draft than they "should" and one of my favorite draft strategies right now is to go Selesnya, then take mono-colored cards from *Guildpact*, and then go Azorius. You get a very nice, very aggressive deck that way. Similarly, there is no direct path to Simic and I think that's kind of cool too. If you set yourself up for it, it should be easier to get than the *Dissension* guilds that do fit on natural 3-color, 3-guild progressions though the 3 packs. (Next time you draft, consider having no *Ravnica* guild and then Izzet and then you are set up to take any of the three *Dissension* packs, including Simic.) The secret truth is that if every little thing about **Magic** were perfectly balanced, the game would be less fun.

May 24, 2006



**Q:** Which is the most destructive guild: The Cult of Rakdos or the Gruul clans? The Cult normally focus on bloodshed but the Clans destroy anything (including people) that shows anything civilized. Which guild is the most destructive?

--Patrick

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

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

Interesting question, Patrick. I'd say the Gruul are more destructive, but perhaps only because the guild opposes civilization in an almost entirely civilized world. In other words, if Ravnica were a world covered in wilderness rather than in streets and buildings, I think the Rakdos would outdo the Gruul in destructiveness.

May 23, 2006



**Q:** On April 26, 2004, Jill Schmeichel asked Elaine Chase:

*"I was curious if there were any women working at Wizards in R&D?"*

You, Elaine Chase, finished your witty and eloquent answer with:

*"So what's it like being the only woman in TCG R&D? Maybe if someone sends that question in to Ask Wizards, I'll tell you about it...."*

Well, I am asking precisely this. How does it feel, Mrs. Chase?

--Carlos

Zurich

**A:** From **Elaine Chase**, **Magic** Senior Brand Manager

Well, it took someone sooooo long to ask me that I actually don't even work in TCG R&D anymore. In August of 2004 I voluntarily left the dream job of playing games for a living and moved into the business side of things. After a stint on our licensed TCG business, I am currently the Senior Brand Manager for all things **Magic**. But I won't let this small technicality get in the way of answering your very original and well thought-out question.

Honestly, my R&D experience wasn't all that different than anyone else's. I've always fit in with the **Magic** player type, and I never would have come to work here if it were any different. I did tend to get asked my opinion on things like "is there too much cleavage in this art?" (My answer was almost always "no".) I spent more time than others working on rules systems and teaching tools, but that had more to do with my background in education than the fact that I was a woman. At the end of the day, the psychographic of a **Magic** player is virtually the same regardless of gender. It just ends up that more men fit that psychographic, but that doesn't mean women don't exist in the game. So the next time you see a woman at an event, don't be afraid. In all likelihood, she will have the same interests as you and you'll probably get along swimmingly.

Why did I leave R&D? Was it the smelly basketball socks strewn around the TCG pit? The incessant stream of questions like "if you found out that you were born with a third arm and your parents had it surgically removed

when you were a baby, would you be mad at them?" The endless barrage of cards thrown at my Muppets action figure collection in an attempt to knock them over? How about the time that my thoughtful workmates dumped the bones of about 2 dozen Buffalo wings in my garbage can? Or was it just the fact that no one in the public answered my obvious cry for attention in my Ask Wizards answer two years ago? I leave it up to you to decide.

So what the heck does Brand do anyway? Maybe if someone sends that question to Ask Wizards, I'll tell you about it. But given what happened last time I tried this, I won't hold my breath. Maybe by the time it comes in I'll be in Finance... 😊

May 22, 2006



**Q:** Hello! Like most other fans, I am drooling in anticipation of the *Coldsnap* prerelease, and I was just wondering - what is the format of that tournament going to be? I'm guessing that you are not going to print out more *Ice Age* starters, so are you just going to give us 5 or 6 *Coldsnap* booster packs, or 3 packs and a 9th edition starter, or (even cooler) 3 packs and a *Ravnica* starter? I'm just dying to know!

Thanks,  
Greg, Seattle, Washington, USA

**A:** From **Scott Larabee**, DCI Program Manager

"Thanks for your questions, Greg.

No, we are not reprinting *Ice Age* Starters. At *Coldsnap* prereleases, each player will receive 5 *Coldsnap* boosters with which to build a 40-card minimum deck. Players will be able to add as much basic land as necessary. Note that the only snow-covered basic lands players will be able to put into their decks are those that they opened in their initial 5 boosters. Players will not be able to request additional snow-covered basic land."

May 19, 2006



**Q:** "I've caught you! Did you think we wouldn't crack the code? Do you believe us to be so ignorant as not to notice the obvious anagram? We all know that the Azorius Senate was created by simply scrambling the letters of this phrase: 'Urza as teen Oiso.' So go ahead, admit it. Be truthful. Urza is coming back in *Dissension*! And under the guise of a teenaged Masashi Oiso! Or I suppose it could be 'Oiso as teen Urza...' WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?!"

--Matt  
Chicago, IL

**A:** From **Matt Cavotta**, **Magic** Creative Writer:

"Matt,

"I must say you are wildly off course with this theory. First of all, 'Azorius' is not spelled with a second letter O. This completely debunks your Oiso discovery. Secondly, the word 'Senate' does not see official use within the halls of Prahv. There, within the Spires of Order, a complex legal language is spoken and the word they use for their collective body of officials is 'Felskreim.' So, if we follow your conspiracy theorist's trail, Azorius Felskreim leads us not to Masashi Oiso. Instead, it reads: 'Mike Flores is Urza!'"

"And if you believe any of this, then you may be as blind as the **Blind Seer**. (Hey wait.... Flores wears glasses. Are they tinted red? Could it be???)"

May 18, 2006



**Q:** "I wasn't into **Magic** when *Invasion* and the early gold cards were released. However, I think the world of Ravnica has played a much bigger role in distinguishing the flavor of all the color pairs of **Magic**. Surely there will be no avoiding the appearance of guilds in tournaments to come (even with the appearance of the new *Time Spiral* block), but do you think you have shaped the thinking of players too much by making guilds? Are you worried about players always thinking about guilds when they create decks further in the future?"

--Benjamin  
Beaufort, SC, USA

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

"Heh. Chris Galvin (the VP of Organized Play) likes to say that there are two kinds of problems in the world - high class problems, and low class problems. Some problems are problems you just don't mind having! Running out of cards to sell and being forced back on press, having too many people show up for a tournament, and having the flavor of a block capture the public's imagination so effectively that it colors all future perceptions would all fit into the category of 'high class problems.' I don't know if the guilds have been quite that successful, but I can assure you that we are delighted by the way the public has embraced them. We spent a lot of time thinking about what precisely a guild would be like if it combined elements of this color with elements of that color. We certainly hoped the players would really dig in to these concepts and appreciate the way in which everything was put together, so it's really rewarding to see that that is in fact just what's happening. I certainly expect the guilds themselves to stay relevant to Standard constructed even after *Time Spiral* comes out, and I expect them to stay relevant to Extended for as long as they are there. As far as the spirit and flavor of the guilds goes, I guess only time will tell. I wouldn't say I'm 'worried' that guild flavors will color all future multi-color decks. I would say I'm curious to see how things play out in the public consciousness and I'm curious to see how our creative team reacts to the public's sensibilities."

May 17, 2006



**Q:** "Does 'Kraj' mean anything? IE, is it a personal name, an acronym (Kr.A(j)), a Ravnican letter (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Kraj, etc), a serial number, or is it just a random collection of letters?"

--Jason  
Huntsville, TX

**A:** From **Matt Cavotta, Magic** Creative Writer:

"Jason,

"Though I am sure Momir Vig has given the big purple pile a pet name of his own, 'Kraj' is not it. The word 'kraj' is of Czech origin, and means last, finish, edge, or terminus. In the case of Vig's pursuit of biological perfection, **Experiment Kraj** represents the culmination of it all, the 'last' experiment, the 'cutting edge,' the ultimate success. Thus, the Simic no longer need to bother referring to Experiment Two-Million, Four Hundred Fifty-five Thousand Twelve or Two-Million, Four Hundred Fifty-five Thousand Thirteen. They've reached the end of the line, and we can (thankfully) just call it 'Kraj.'"

May 16, 2006



**Q:** "How did you design the art for the Kamigawa block spirits? I mean, cards like **Mannichi, the Fevered Dream** and **Ore Gorgor** don't look like anything I've seen before. I think the Kamigawa art is great, but when I think of a spirit, I think of creatures like moaning spirit or one of legion's muses."

--Lars  
Eindhoven, Netherlands

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

"The short answer to your question, Lars, is that a Western spirit is very different from a kami (translated as 'spirit' in English, but really untranslatable).

"The overarching premise of the Kamigawa block is 'Shinto gone wrong.' In Shinto, a belief system indigenous to Japan, everything has a kami. Kami are gods of a sort; they're the eternal essences of things, people, places, ideas, and so on. To give Kamigawa its own distinct look, as well as to reflect the fact that the plane was in turmoil, we concepted the kami as bizarre creatures that look out of place in the natural world, as though they couldn't even realistically exist within it."

May 15, 2006



**Q:** "The Azorius mechanic, Forecast, bears a striking resemblance to that of **Infernal Spawn of Evil**, from **Unglued**. Was this the direct inspiration for Forecast?"

--Frank  
Lockport, New York

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

"Frank,

"I'd say more indirect. Here's what happened. During *Dissension* design we were trying to find a good white/blue mechanic. While looking we found ourselves checking out a mechanic called Flare that Mike Elliot had designed and had been trying to get into a set for several years. I believe that Flare was inspired by **Infernal Spawn of Evil** but that Mike took a different direction with it. For example, Flare cards had an effect that could be played out of your hands as many times as you had the mana to spend it. This made the effect feel more like buyback. When we tried using it in *Dissension*, I shifted the mechanic back towards **Infernal Spawn of Evil**. That is, I restricted its use to once per upkeep. I did though spare the players the trouble of having to actually say something every time they used the ability (we've saved verbal costs for *Un*-sets and spells in **Dungeons & Dragons**). Which leads us to the more interesting question. How many 'real' **Magic** cards are going to be inspired by *Un*-cards? The answer - more than you'd expect. Stay tuned. :)"

May 12, 2006



**Q:** "In the art for **Dream Leash**, I know that the mage is Dimir, but is the dragon **Niv-Mizzet**? He seems to have the same skin flaps and face structure."

--Evan  
Franklin, Indiana, USA

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

"Evan, the Player's Guide included with the *Guildpact* Fat Pack contains the answer to your question:

"Another Izzet cameo might be misleading if you know the Izzet's great draconic leader, Niv-Mizzet. **Dream Leash** depicts a sleeping dragon under the spell of a Dimir wizard. Though the dragon looks like Niv-Mizzet, it's actually one of his many cloned dragon underlings. Niv-Mizzet likes his dragons to look like him, but the giveaway is in the scale -- Niv-Mizzet himself would be at least three to four times bigger than this dragon."

May 11, 2006



**Q:** "I was recently given a copy of *Dissension's* *Gobhobler Rats* as a preview by a local card shop, and discovered how the Hellbent ability works. I then immediately thought of *One With Nothing*, which goes from being a generally dismissed junk rare to a potentially nasty surprise for your opponent. It made me wonder - since these sets are planned years in advance, are some cards deliberately made to be unappreciated until something in the next set or block comes along to make them viable?"

--Patrick  
Port Orchard, Washington, USA

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

"Patrick,

"Did we plan it or was it a happy accident? Neither actually. What we did was better compared to a trick used in writing soap operas. When writing an ongoing storyline, you need to keep coming up with more stories. One of the tricks to doing this is leaving open 'threads'. That is, the writers write something that has potential without knowing at the time how they are going to use it.

"To use a modern example (from a nighttime soap, *Desperate Housewives*), there was an episode where one of the husbands (Tom, Lynette's husband for fans of the show) talks about how he did a horrible thing that that his wife might never forgive. Ever since then, nothing has come of it. But the writers of the show know that they've set themselves up to use it at some point in the future. And quite possibly, it won't be for the thing that they originally thought they might do when they had him say it in the first place. The important thing is that they've set an open-ended piece in play that they can come back to later.

"That's what *One with Nothing* was. The designers knew that it was the kind of card that in the right environment could be useful. And when we made it, we were aware that one day we'd make such an environment. So when we were working on *Dissension* and came upon the hellbent mechanic, one of the things that prodded us along was the knowledge that it would create such an environment. So did we plan it? Not exactly, but we did set ourselves up so that we could make it pay off later."

May 10, 2006



**Q:** "[April 13's Arcana](#) features snippets of *Guildpact* art that show the *Dissension* guilds in action, but it also features incredible-looking full color guild symbols for the three guilds. I think I speak for the entire Vorthos community when I say that I would love it if you could provide symbols in this style for the first seven guilds and make them available on this site."

--Will  
Minneapolis, MN

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

"Will,

"You got it. Here's the full set."





May 9, 2006

**Q:** "Why don't enchantments use the tapping mechanic all the other types of permanents use? It couldn't cause any rules confusion and would allow more use out of the card, such as an additional +0/+1 on a **Crusade**-style enchantment."

-- Matthew  
River City, IA

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

"The reason we don't do this is very similar to the reason that we don't put counterspells in black or enchantment removal in red. Colors and, in this case, card types, are defined as much by won't they don't do as what they do. As is, artifacts and enchantments are mechanically similar. Both are permanents that can sit in play creating a global effect. To help separate the two, R&D has come up with some guidelines. One of these is that enchantments don't tap. If they have activations, they can be used multiple times. In short, enchantments don't tap because if they did, we'd just make the card as an artifact."

May 8, 2006

**Q:** "Is there a reason why sometimes the Ask Wizards question of the day is a repeat?"

--Andrew  
Brenham, Texas

**A:** From **Scott Johns**, **magicthegathering.com** Content Manager:

"It's a rare occurrence Andrew, but when it does happen there are normally three possible explanations. Most often, it's because that particular question is getting asked so much at Ask Wizards that it's worth reprinting every once in a great while. For example, we get asked about the different corners on Alpha and Beta cards on almost a daily basis. An answer by Richard Garfield was posted back on [September 25, 2002](#). Because we were getting the question so often I felt it was reasonable to repeat the answer on [July 19th, 2005](#), nearly three years later.

Another possibility is that it's around the end of the calendar year. **Magicthegathering.com** closes down for the last two weeks of each December to give everyone a break around the holidays, but we run 'best of content each weekday on the site during that time. So any time you visit the site during that period it's likely that all the daily Ask Wizards you see were run sometime previously that year.

"The last reason is usually because I was sick or otherwise unexpectedly out of the office. When things are running well I'm usually able to send Ask Wizards answers to [Doug Beyer](#) in one-week batches so that we've got some stored up. Sometimes we don't have that many in the can, or I'm unexpectedly gone longer than that, or who knows what else. Normally in that case I'm able to do them from home (as I am with this one) but in rare cases that doesn't work out and either someone else in the office has to scramble to get one in time or we just pick an old Ask Wizards that's still applicable."

May 5, 2006

**Q:** "Although it is clear that the Orzhov worship money during the time period that *Guildpact* takes place in, there must have been an actual belief system in the mix at some time. Is there anything you can tell us about

what the basic principles, gods, etc. of the Orzhov religion were before its corruption?"

--Alex  
San Diego, CA

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

"The origins of the Orzhov 'faith' are shrouded in mystery, Alex. The only hint in cards is **Godless Shrine**, and that card shows a crumbled temple in which the central symbol of worship has long since been removed. Given the length of Ravnica's history, it's possible that the Orzhov faith was concocted as a means of control from the very beginning. More likely, however, the Orzhov appropriated an existing religion and adapted it to their purposes. Little is known about such ancient religions, although it's known that the Nephilim were somehow relevant."

May 4, 2006



**Q:** "What is so good about **Necropotence**? There is so much talk about it but I don't understand."

--YiJing  
Singapore

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

"I'm going to assume your question refers to the fact that the card was a fixture of tournaments decks for as long as it was legal. (For casual play, including multiplayer play, the card isn't actually all that good.) Over many years of tournament play, theorists have worked out that 'card advantage' is one of the defining principles of successful decks. Cards are the most fundamental resource available to you when you play **Magic** and usually, when you manage to draw more cards than your opponent (or you manage to neutralize multiple of his cards with just one of yours) you will win. **Necropotence** delivers potentially ridiculous card advantage at a relatively low cost. The original Necro decks (like the one I used to win \$25,000 at Pro Tour Chicago in 1997) would play threats and cheap disruption spells and then use Necro to refill with more of the same. Sure it costs you a healthy chunk of your life total, but if you're drawing and playing 3 different spells per turn (plus dropping a land every turn to eventually fuel a large Drain Life), you shouldn't be taking much damage. My deck, for example, was full of **Lightning Bolts** to kill enemy creatures, pump knights to attack or block with, and **Hymn to Tourach** to knock their other spells away before they could cast them. With almost everything in my deck costing 1 or 2 mana, it was very realistic to play 2-3 spells every turn until I started pointing **Lake of the Dead**-fueled **Drain Lives** at their head. Fueling a big **Firestorm** was also quite a lot of fun.

"Later Necro decks were even less fair. The combo players eventually figured out that the best way to put together a lethal 3 card combo was to pay a bunch of life to find whichever card was missing. The most degenerate of these decks would play **Illusions of Grandeur**, gaining 20 life to use to draw yet more cards, and then **Donate** the Illusions to the opponent and watch gleefully as they struggled to pay the cumulative upkeep. That combo was pretty good even without **Necropotence** to fuel things, but adding in **Necropotence** made the deck almost unbeatable. (There were also plenty of Necro-combo decks that did not need the life-gaining from Illusions as well.)"

May 3, 2006



**Q:** "It seems that some of the guilds in Ravnica have specific allied guilds and enemy guilds, such as Orzhov being allied with the Golgari for business reasons as shown in the flavor text of **Streetbreaker Wurm**. If this is so could you tell us which guilds have deals or enmities with each other?"

--Travis  
Omaha, NE

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

"Those guild relationships are fluid and changeable based on context and circumstances, Travis. For example, the Azorius, Boros, and Selesnya generally cooperate when it comes to upholding the law of the land. But when the Azorius get too caught up in pontification and bureaucracy, the Boros will often 'go rogue' and act on their own, and the Selesnya tend to keep their affairs to themselves whenever possible. Similarly, the Rakdos and Gruul might join in each other's havoc-wreaking sessions, but there's no meaningful attachment before or after the fun. There are lots of other natural guild ties and enmities too numerous to itemize here, and there are also some guilds that have trouble relating to anyone else (the Simic come to mind, for example)."

May 2, 2006



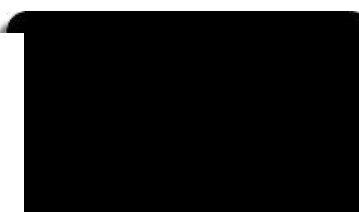
**Q:** "**Pride of the Clouds** looks like a great and fun card, but I'm very confused: Why doesn't it read, 'Pride of the Clouds's power and toughness are each equal to the number of creatures you control with flying?' It's confusing to have a creature that has the same power/toughness setting ability as 13 others in Standard, yet which uses the template for boosting other creatures. Why does **Pride of the Clouds** warrant this difference?"

--Jay  
Philadelphia, PA

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

"The answer to your question can be found in the comments on this card in the Multiverse database:

Del 8/9: No amount of fiddling with the name and/or the colors of the tokens would make this rules text fit. I was able to trim the necessary line by changing from a \*/\* with P/T = number of flying



creatures to a 1/1 with Radiant, Archangel's ability. Okay?  
AF 8/9: Looks good to me. I'm pretty sure the tokens have to be WU birds at this point.  
MP 9/2: Cost to cast and Forecast cost down by 1 each.

"This kind of thing happens a lot during card development. Mark Gottlieb will find a card with rules problems, or I'll come across a card with length issues. The next step is for us to give the development team printable options that fulfill their goals for the card.

"This particular functionality tweak is pretty invisible. In the language of rules gurus, the old ability applied in sublayer 6a (see rule 418.5, 'Interaction of Continuous Effects'), and the new one applies in sublayer 6d. Whatever. All you or the development team really need to know is that **Omnibian** turns **Pride of Clouds** into a 3/3 creature that still gets the bonus. The card is a little more powerful, but it lost the useful *"\*/"* message of 'hey, read the rules to see how big I am!' As an added bonus, this particular ability exactly matches **Radiant Archangel**, which needed this template because it has additional power and toughness."



May 1, 2006

**Q:** "What went into the decision for **Vulturous Zombie** to not be a vampire? Since he has the feeding ability (whenever a card goes to an opponent's graveyard, he gets stronger) he seems pretty vampiric."

--Kirk  
Glenside, PA

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

"**Vulturous Zombie** could have been a vampire, Kirk, although I had a couple of reasons to make it something else. First, the 'from anywhere' in the Zombie's rules text diverges significantly from vampire flavor in my mind. It means the Zombie grows not just with the deaths of creatures, but with anything put into the graveyard - cards in hand, lands in play, and so on. The way I made sense of that difference in my head was to envision the creature as thriving not just on blood, but on decay more widely defined. That plus the Golgari guild identity led me to 'Plant Zombie.' The secondary reason that it's not a vampire is that I thought it would help define the guilds more strongly if each one had their own big flyer, and House Dimir had already claimed Vampire. (That pattern broke down with the Orzhov, however, because there was a lot of demand around here for a black/white angel.)"



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