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Sketches: Minister of Impediments

Magic Arcana
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Welcome to another edition of [Sketches](#)! In honor of Azorius Week, today we look at the process behind illustrating that hybrid Azorius tapper extraordinaire, **Minister of Impediments**. But first, some background on the artist, Brian Hagan.

Artist Portfolio

Artist [Brian Hagan](#) is new to **Magic** illustration as of *Dissension* (welcome, Brian!). He illustrated *Flaring Flame-Kin*, *Sandstorm Eidolon* and *Shielding Plax* in addition to *Minister of Impediments*.

Art Description

The first step of the creation of a card's art is its art description. The art description tells the artist what the card will do, what its flavor is, and what the mood of the illustration should be. Here were the instructions given to Brian for *Minister of Impediments*:

Color: White-blue guild

Location: Some echoing marble hallway inside an Azorius court

Action: Show a sniveling, low-level Azorius functionary whose sole duty is to delay others with red tape and bureaucracy. You could show a large Selesnya (Green/White) centaur being annoyed by this official.

Focus: The bureaucrat with the magical power to delay others

Mood: "And furthermore, section 17.g.3 of the Codex Infinatum clearly states that those wishing to see His Honor must first appeal"

There is a lot going on in that art description; this piece will require special attention to evoke the Azorius feel successfully.

The next step is for the artist to submit sketches of his or her vision of the art description.

Sketches

Here's Brian's initial sketch submitted for *Minister of Impediments*:



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Minister of Impediments sketch by Brian Hagan

We've got all the elements in place here, but there's still work to be done. Brian has chosen to show a minotaur instead of a centaur, but that's fine. More pressing is the issue of the Vedalken functionary shown here; there's a continuity problem. This figure has the four arms and protective suit of a *Mirrodin* Vedalken, whereas the Vedalken from Ravnica have just the one pair of arms and no bulky protective gear (compare, for example, *Synod Artificer* to *Vedalken Entrancer*).

(But then, you ask, what's going on with *Vigean Graftmage*? ...Some other time.)

In addition, with the perspective this way, it might be hard to tell that the Azorius figure is the focus of the piece rather than the minotaur. The creative team recommended Brian turn the "camera" around to face the active Azorius figure rather than his poor, impeded target.

Here's the revised sketch.



Minister of Impediments sketch by Brian Hagan

Now, as you can see, we've swiveled around to see approximately the same scene from a new angle, over the minotaur's shoulder. The Vedalken has been replaced by an Azorius wizard, his long list of regulations seeming to extend his white beard to the floor. There were still concerns that the wizard did not take up enough of the frame compared to the minotaur, but as you're about to see, that concern was addressed as well.

Final Art

Brian submitted this final art. As you can see, the "camera" has moved in for a tighter shot on the Azorius wizard, and the minotaur has fallen further back into the lower left-hand corner of the frame. The minotaur is also in heavy shadow, while the functionary literally has the spotlight, drawing the eye to him. And the rays emanating from his staff shows that it's not just mundane legalese that has stricken the offending minotaur -- it's the power of a full-fledged law-mage. By the time the card received its final art and official name of **Minister of Impediments**, the functionary had grown in stature quite a bit since its art description.



Minister of Impediments final art by Brian Hagan

Finished Card

Here's the card in its final state, as you'll see in booster packs of *Dissension*. Check out the [Dissension release tournaments](#) this weekend!



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