

**Yet another saucy preview for you, but this time you are going to have to work to get it.**

## **Magic: the Puzzling - *A Time Spiral Sneaky Preview***

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- [Jeff Till Archive](#)

**Y**ou have already had a week's worth of sneak previews for *Time Spiral*. Now it's time for something a little different: a *sneaky* preview. I'm not going to show you the preview card. I'm not even going to hide it in a link at the bottom of the page. You're gonna have to work to see this one!

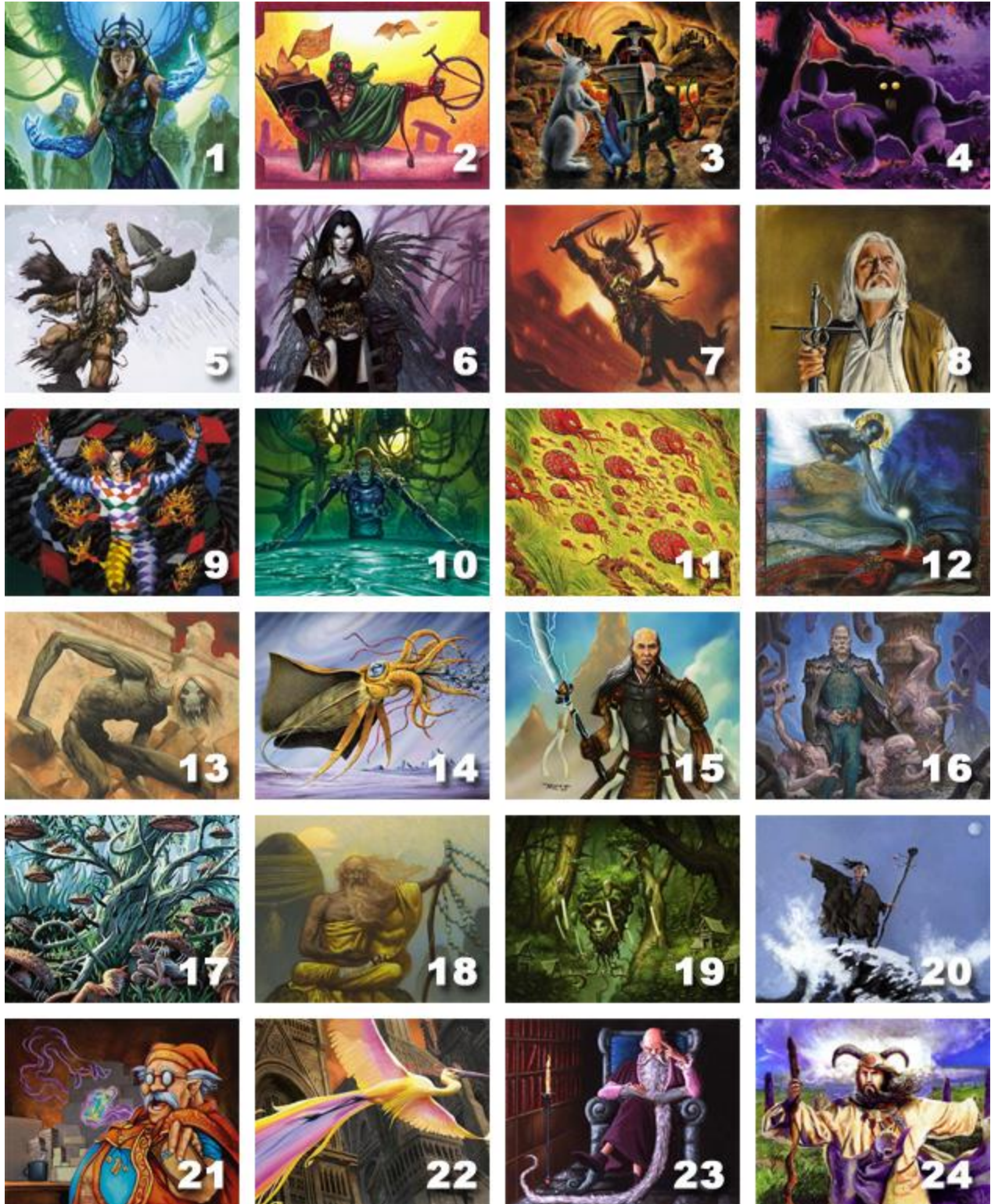
In this article, you'll find six completely different puzzles, each one of which will reveal different parts of the preview card. Some are easy, and some are not. How many will you be able to solve? Will you need any hints? There's only one way to find out! Good luck, and have fun.

Note: you can solve any part without having to solve any other parts first.

### **Part I: Card Art and Name**

#### **Cart Art:**

The first puzzle is about as straightforward as they come. The art for 24 different cards is shown below. Twenty-three of the cards are already in print, and one is totally new. Can you figure out which piece of art has yet to see print?



**Card Name:**

I'll refer to the card's name as PREVIEW\_CARD throughout the article. Why wouldn't I just use the card's actual name? That's for you to figure out! Below are the scrambled up (or rather, more

organized) names of 23 **Magic** cards. The good news is that each card corresponds to one of the pieces of art found in the image above, so the job of unscrambling isn't too tough. The bad news is that I've stuck an extra letter in each anagram. Your mission is to unscramble the words and figure out what the extra letters are. These letters form an anagram for the true name of PREVIEW\_CARD.

The task of unscrambling an unknown card name might be a little daunting, especially considering you may not find a couple of the words in a dictionary. Worry not, because if you order the words below in the same way they appear in the image above, everything will sort itself out.

1. aaceegikmnnrsuz
2. aaaaabcehlnnostvv
3. aaabddeillnorruvw
4. aabdddefioprss
5. aabiiikkmnrrrt
6. aabeehimnrs
7. aabeeghimnrrsstu
8. aacehhilnoqrsu
9. ccceellooooooprrttt
10. aaaceillmnooprstttuy
11. acdeekkmorrss
12. aacddeeefikmnnoorsty
13. aaabdeeffghilllnnost
14. abdeenoprtr
15. aadfilmrty
16. aabdgillorsw
17. aaabdeginrrstu
18. adggiiinprstu
19. bddeeeimmnoprrss
20. aceeiklmnorrw
21. acgiiiiimmnoorrsvvy
22. aaeeefglmnost
23. adeehirrstvw

Hint:

## Part II: Color and Casting Cost

It's common knowledge that if you take a [Glory Seeker](#) and combine it with [Serra's Embrace](#), you end up with a replica [Serra Angel](#). Of course, you're paying six total mana (3<sup>⚡</sup>⚡⚡) for your construction, instead of the normal five (3<sup>⚡</sup>⚡), costing you an extra ⚡. Luckily, some creatures can be constructed for less than the sum of their parts. For example, [Enormous Baloth](#) = [Grizzly Bears](#) + [Nightmare Lash](#) + 5 Swamps, for a savings of one colorless mana (if you ignore the loss of life required to equip).

Your goal is to construct the following creatures at the greatest savings possible. The total savings is the mana cost of PREVIEW\_CARD.

**Creature 1:** [Lost Soul](#)

**Creature 2:** [Ramirez DePietro](#)

**Creature 3:** [Tunneler Wurm](#)

**Rules:**

1. The creatures' power, toughness, color(s), and abilities must match exactly. Other information, such as creature type, is not important.
2. All changes must be permanent, so temporary bonuses from cards like [Giant Growth](#), [Firebreathing](#), and [Unstable Mutation](#) do not apply. You may use spells or cards that grant bonuses permanently, such as [Thrive](#) or [Living Armor](#). Treat counters as part of the creature's base power / toughness.
3. You may use Equipment, but you must factor in both the casting cost and the equip cost. The same applies to any other activation costs.
4. A savings of colored mana beats the savings of the same number of colorless mana.
5. You may only use any card once in this puzzle.



### **Part III: Rarity**

PREVIEW\_CARD shares a rarity with the following cards:

- Aladdin
- Dancing Scimitar
- Dragon Engine
- Ivory Tower
- Onulet

### **Part IV: Creature Type**

The secret's out. PREVIEW\_CARD is a creature. Consider that the only free piece of information you get today. Well, okay, I'll give up a little more. PREVIEW\_CARD has 2 creature types in addition to being Legendary.

#### **Creature Type 1:**

To find out the first creature type, I've provided five groups below. For each group, you need to find another creature type that combines with each type in the group and can be found on some creature. So for example, if you thought the answer for group 1 was Snake, there would need to be some creature that is a Bird and a Snake, some creature that is a Human and a Snake, some creature that is a Monk and a Snake, etc. Once you have found the five creature types (one for each group), repeat the process on those five types to find the final solution. Sorry, but for this puzzle, pretend that [Mistform Ultimus](#) does not exist.

- Group 1:** Bird, Human, Monk, Thrull, Zombie
- Group 2:** Beast, Druid, Elf, Plant, Spider
- Group 3:** Cat, Cleric, Giant, Goblin, Minotaur
- Group 4:** Avatar, Mercenary, Rogue, Soldier, Warrior
- Group 5:** Assassin, Insect, Knight, Spirit, Wizard

**Creature Type 2:**

Since [Misform Ultimus](#) was excluded from the first part of the puzzle, it is only fair that a trivia question based on M.U. will reveal PREVIEW\_CARD's second creature type.

Readers of [magicthegathering.com](http://magicthegathering.com) were asked to submit short stories celebrating the day that [Mistform Ultimus](#) obtained what creature type?



**Part V: Ability**

At last we get to the most interesting part of the card: its ability! PREVIEW\_CARD's ability is the following:

Whenever you  ,  
 where X  
 is  .  
 When  ,  
 .

---

Whenever you , where X is . When , .

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All you have to do is guess which is the proper value for each dropdown. There are only 3125 possible choices, so it should be easy. To help you along, I'll provide some hints. For the true puzzle masters out there, only the first 7 hints are required to figure out the ability.

[Hint 1:](#)

The word 'sacrifice' appears on this card exactly once. Note that any hints that refer to words on a card refer to the root word (inflectional root, for the linguists out there). This means that the word 'sacrifices' might appear exactly once, instead of sacrifice, etc.

Hint 2:

This card does not reference graveyards at all.

Hint 3:

There are 9 words total in the 1st and 3rd dropdowns.

Hint 4:

This card does not reference life at all.

Hint 5:

There is a word in common in the 2nd and 4th dropdowns.

Hint 6:

The word "more" appears on this card, but the word "all" does not.

Hint 7:

If you know what the correct value for dropdown 1 is, then you can determine the value for dropdown 3.

Hint 8:

If there are nothing but lands and PREVIEW\_CARD in play and you are at 23 life, casting the following spells will cause PREVIEW\_CARD to die: [Platinum Angel](#), [Hypnox](#), PREVIEW\_CARD, [Draco](#)

Hint 9:

Playing [Consult the Necrosages](#) will never trigger PREVIEW\_CARD.

Hint 10:

The position of the correct solutions in the dropdowns are (in no particular order): 1, 2, 3, 3, 4.

## **Part VI: Power and Toughness**

Throughout the entire game, you and Pete have done nothing but accumulate a massive number of Enchantments and Land. Finally, this turn you drew the only creature in your deck: PREVIEW\_CARD. And you have just enough mana to cast it as well (how lucky). You put PREVIEW\_CARD on the stack and begin to do some calculations. It turns out that it has exactly the right power and toughness to kill Pete this turn. One number lower in either stat would not have been enough to end the game. What is PREVIEW\_CARD's power and toughness? Assume that the ability of PREVIEW\_CARD is irrelevant.

### **In Play:**

#### **You (6 life):**

Several Basic Lands (tapped)

[Aether Flash](#)

[Goblin Bombardment](#)

[Lashknife Barrier](#)

[Light of Sanction](#)

[Parapet](#)

[Powerstone Minefield](#)

2 [Seal of Cleansing](#)

2 [Serra's Hymn](#) (1 counter each)

[Statecraft](#)

**Pete (7 life):**

Several Basic Lands (tapped)

[Aether Flash](#)

[Divine Presence](#)

[Furnace of Rath](#)

[Mass Hysteria](#)

[No Mercy](#)

[Pandemonium](#)

[Powerstone Minefield](#)

[Seal of Fire](#)

PREVIEW\_CARD is on the stack.

[Hint:](#)

**Rule 419.9a** If two or more replacement or prevention effects are attempting to modify the way an event affects an object or player, the affected object's controller (or its owner if it has no controller) or the affected player chooses one to apply. Then the other effect applies if it is still appropriate.

**I hope you had fun with these puzzles. Solutions will be posted Wednesday. And finally, thanks again to my tester, Chris Lau.**