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# Another Day at Magic Academy

Noah Weil  
*Limited Information*  
 Tuesday, September 19, 2006



**Professor:** Good morning class.  
**Class:** ♪Good morning Professor♪.

**Professor:** Well we've got a bit of a treat today. Our gracious principal has given us multiple new cards to talk about. First though, we're going to look at a bit of history. Can anyone tell me a powerful card to come out of Alpha?

**Students:** **Black Lotus!** **Balance!** **Ancestral Recall!**

**Professor:** Not bad, but not what I'm looking for. The card I'm referring to is the almighty **Twiddle**.

**Class:** **Twiddle?**

**Professor:** Oh my yes. Back in the day, this card did everything. It tapped stuff, and if you can believe this, it untapped stuff too! Most of you were in swaddling back then, but **Twiddle** actually killed stuff, something your precious **Ancestral** never did.

**Howard:** **Twiddle** killing a guy? Oh, you mean that **Skulking Ghost** that you mentioned in your *Mirage* discussions.

**Professor:** **Tar Pit Warrior** too, but they're not what I'm talking about. Look through your notes on the lecture titled "*Arbitrary and Capricious Rules of Antiquity*".

**Howard:** (*Shuffling papers*) Oh I see. If a creature became tapped after blocking, it wouldn't deal damage to the attacker. Huh, that is arbitrary and capricious.

**Professor:** Indeed, but highly relevant for Limited play. Cards like **Enervate** and **Twitch** were used to negate a blocker, often resulting in a dead creature and a drawn card. This won't be on the test, but legend has it that **Infuse** cost more than **Enervate** solely because of Randy Gallegos' art. No one knows if it's true, but back then, tapping their card was certainly better than untapping one of your own.



**William:** But sir, that rule isn't in place any longer. So **Twiddle** doesn't seem very good in Limited.

**Professor:** I see. Why is that?

**William:** Well, uh, the effect is nice but it doesn't do enough.

**Professor:** Please elaborate.

**William:** Well it doesn't make mana, and it's not a threat, and it doesn't remove their threats. After that, there isn't really room left in a 40 card deck.

**Professor:** An overly simplistic explanation but essentially correct. Our benefactors, Wizards of the Coast...

**All:** Praise be!

**Teacher:** ...have tried to punch up **Twiddle** in recent years. Can anyone give me some examples?

**Students:** **Toils of Night and Day.** **Psychic Puppetry.** **Dream's Grip.**

**Professor:** Good, good. How have these worked out? Yes?

**Theodore:** Well, they're better versions of **Twiddle** but they still suffer the same problem. They don't make mana or produce threats or remove threats. Unless they're part of some particularly synergistic strategy, they're just not reliable. You're not really a fan of unreliable stuff in Limited, right sir?

**Professor:** Correct, well done. A multicolored star for you. Technically **Twiddle** and its ilk are reliable, in that there's always *something* to tap or untap. The unknown part is how effective they'll be when you draw one. More often than not, they just won't be worth a card in a deck. So what's the solution?

**Howard:** Cantrip?

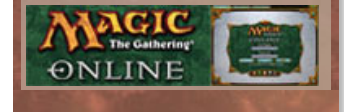
**Professor:** Well that's clearly been done before. Not a bad solution, but even if you don't lose a card in the casting, you don't gain much either. Three mana for cycling can be prohibitive. C'mon kids, you want the effect, you just want some consistency attached to help actually win a game. What does that mean?

**William:** Make it... a threat?

**Professor:** Yes, correct, excellent! **Lights!**

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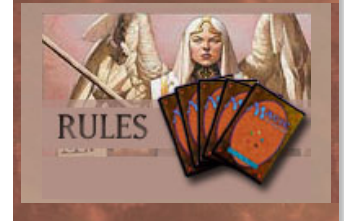
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**Class:** Ooooooh!

**Professor:** Impressive isn't it? This one is courtesy of *Scrye* magazine, and it's really excellent. Anyone want to explain why?

**Howard:** Well it's a creature and a morph besides, so it always has some impact on the game.

**Professor:** Good, who else?

**Nester:** Merfolk are cool! I like the fishies!

**Professor:** Great, thanks for sharing. Anyone else?

**Theodore:** Well it is kind of a cool to see an archaic creature type. But I think you're referring to the single blue morph cost. The **Twiddle** effect looks pretty good when it really does cost one Blue.

**Professor:** Continue.

**Theodore:** Well with a single mana morph cost, you can keep casting spells without too much of a development loss. You can keep playing creatures while waiting around for the right time to flip it up, perhaps to negate a key blocker for a turn. At the right time that could easily win a game...

**Class:** Yay! Winning!

**Theodore:** (*getting excited*) Yeah, and it's a morph right, so only you know what's really under there. So they might leave extra creatures back to block because they're afraid of the Trickster, even when it's something else! And all you have to do is leave a single Blue untapped to keep the bluff going. That's not bad at all. This card is really good!

**Professor:** Indeed, and you've only scratched the surface. Theodore correctly mentioned one of the selling points of the tap/untap effect: removing a blocker for a turn. What else can you do in Limited with the ability to tap or untap a permanent?

**William:** You can untap a tapped creature to block. You can tap one of their lands during their upkeep to slow them down.

**Nester:** You can untap your artifact and use it again.

**Professor:** Ok, sure. Like what?

**Nester:** Ummm...

**Nester:** *Icy Manipulator!* *Ring of Gix!*

**Professor:** (*sigh*) Anything else?

**Nester:** Umm, *Jandor's Saddlebags?*

**Professor:** You just earned yourself a week of detention, Mister!

**Howard:** How about untapping one of your own lands?

**Professor:** How does that help? You're not generating extra mana.

**Howard:** That's true but you are getting additional *specific* mana. Like, if you only had one Mountain and two Islands, you could use Coral Trickster to untap the Mountain again and cast *Jaya Ballard*, *Task Mage*.

**Theodore:** Or after you've cast *Jaya*, untap her and use her again with the Trickster.

**Professor:** Nice deck!

(*All laugh*)

**Professor:** Alright you've thrown out some good ideas. This is a really flexible card, and like you're saying, it goes into any deck. Before we move on, who wants to try tackling Coral Trickster's stats?

**Howard:** I'll try sir.

**Professor:** Okay Howard, go ahead.

**Howard:** A 2/1 for two in Blue is good. Blue likes have cheap creatures to block while they establish control or win with fliers.

**Professor:** Pretty basic. Try talking about *Time Spiral* specifically and... yes William?

**William:** You can untap Professor Alongi's Stuff Doll for another ping!

**Professor:** Very good William. Howard, please continue.

**Howard:** We already know there's Shadow and Morph. A 2/1 for two means being able to race Shadow creatures. You gain tempo when you use a two mana creature to block their three mana Morph. It lets you stay in the game. Later on you can still have the Morph effect and then still get a useful creature.

**Professor:** Ahhh, very good. You brought up one of the most salient points. Why does having a 2/1 after Morph matter? Yes Theodore?

**Theodore:** There were some Morph creatures with effects you didn't want to use because of their little bodies.

**Professor:** Example?

**Theodore:** Well there's **Headhunter**. You could tag a player for a discard, but afterwards you had a puny little 1/1. You traded a card in their hand for one of your creatures. It's like them "discarding" **Clinging Darkness** to "remove" a creature (*air quotes for emphasis*).

**Professor:** Correct, well said. Having a creature that remains dangerous after flipping means you're more likely to want to use that ability. Isn't it nice to have a Morph creature you actually want to un-Morph?

**Class:** Yes Professor.

**Professor:** These are good ideas class, but we have to move on.

**Class:** Awwwww.

**Professor:** Yes I know, but we still have a lot of ground to cover. Besides there's still some new and exciting cards to see. In fact, here's one from *Lotus Noir* magazine. [Lights!](#)



**Students:** Wow! Rebels! Quinton Hoover!

**Professor:** Yes that's right, now settle down. Yes Wizards of the Coast...

**All:** Praise be!

**Professor:** ...have revived another mechanic, our friends the rebels. Anyone want to give us a walkthrough? Go ahead, William.

**William:** Well, the rebels have historically been very powerful. A steady stream of uncounterable creatures can beat most deck in most formats, given enough time. A player would play a little guy and just keep searching out creatures until an opponent was overwhelmed. Usually you'd beat them so fast, you still had time for kickball.

**Professor:** Kickball, good times. Anything else?

**Theodore:** Yeah, it's still a 2/1 for two so the tempo and racing stuff still apply. You can keep attacking with it and

playing stuff from your hand if you want.

**Nester:** That's dumb! If Amrou Scout finds rebels, that's what you should do with it!

**Professor:** I'm afraid Theodore is correct Nester. Amrou Scout is *flexible* because it can do double duty. You can attack or block with it early, or search out creatures late. That makes it a powerful card in draft. Yes Howard?

**Howard:** What creatures can you search out sir?

**Professor:** Well let's see. [Fresh Volunteers](#), [Whipcorder](#), [Lightbringer](#)...

**Class:** Professor!

**Professor:** Is there a problem? Oh, you want to know what you can find in *Time Spiral*, right?

**Class:** Yeah!

**Professor:** Alright students, [here you go...](#)



**Class:** Professor!!!

**Professor:** Settle down people. Finding another copy is just fine. After you find a second, you're safe from point removal. You get to keep searching out rebels even if your original scout is destroyed. And as Theodore has so eloquently explained, 2/1s look pretty good right now.

**Howard:** You're right as always, sir. But if you could just show us something a little bit new, we'd all really really appreciate it.

**Professor:** Oh you guys. Fine, a brand new card. And, it's a really good one. But don't expect this every day!

**Students:** [♪Thank you Professor.♪](#)



**Students:** Wow! It's really good! Seekers, that's funny!

*(Students laugh)*

**Nester:** I don't get it.

**Professor:** It relates to the card **Seeker** from *Legends*. This rebel has a built in **Seeker**. Unlike that pricey aura though, this creature is quite powerful.

**Nester:** Oh I see. Yeah, a 2/2 evasion creature for three mana is already fine, and when you can search for it and put it directly into play...

**Professor:** Very good Nester. Now we're nearing the end of class time. Does anyone want to make some blanket statements about what we've seen with *Time Spiral* so far? William?

**William:** *Time Spiral* is gonna rock!

**Professor:** Clearly. Theodore?

**Theodore:** The creatures look *really* good, so removal is going to be very important. Barring that, a speedy deck with evasion is going to be necessary to give a player a fighting chance.

**Professor:** Very good. Nester?

**Nester:** Umm, *Time Spiral* is gonna rock!

**Professor:** Yes Nester. Anything else?

**Nester:** Well, uh, it seems like having a lot of lands is important. We know from *Onslaught* that Morph made the third land really important. People played 18 lands in their limited decks back then just so they could guarantee themselves three mana on turn three. Then there's the Rebels and the Spellshapers. Both of these mechanics like lots of lands. Rebels need all the mana to search things out, and then cast cards after searching things out. Spellshapers don't need extra mana to operate, but they are a nice place to put your unneeded lands. Playing extra lands and Spellshapers mean you reduce your chances of mana screw, while having a place to throw lands in case of a flood.

**Professor:** That's very good Nes-

**Nester:** Of course there's buyback too. That's another mechanic that clearly cares about getting lots of mana into play. From what we've seen so far, there will definitely be places to put extra mana. Considering how fast some of these creatures are also, missing land drops could be game over. So it looks like erring on the side of more mana sources rather than less would be effective in *Time Spiral* limited.

*(Class looks at Nester amazed)*

**Professor:** Well done Nester, very well done. Consider your detention revoked. Now there's the bell... Sit down people! You still need to hear your homework assignments.

**Class:** Awwwww!

**Professor:** None of that. Your assignment this week is to go to the [Time Spiral pre-release this weekend](#) and see



new cards, and win some packs, and have fun. Now get out of here. Class dissm-, er that's a got bad juju. Enjoy the rest of your week, and thanks for attending!



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