

## The solution to Monday's Magic: The Puzzling. Magic Tricks

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**H**i, it's me, Mark Rosewater. The good twin. For those that don't know, I don't make [the puzzles](#). They're the work of my evil twin. He gets a real kick out of inflicting pain on **Magic**players. As a sort of penance, I write the answer column where I explain how to solve my evil twin's evil creations. With that said, let's get on with the solution.

The first thing you need to do to solve this puzzle is to examine your routes to victory. Adam is at 4 life. Even if you copy the [Prodigal Sorcerer](#), you only have the ability to deal 2 damage to him directly. This means you are going to have to attack for at least some, if not all, of the damage.

Adam has seven creatures. Can you destroy all of them? You can with the [Magus of the Disk](#). To set it off, you would play it and then copy it with the [Vesuvan Shapeshifter](#). You can [Fool's Demise](#) one of your own creatures and then set off the "disk" thus ending up with only one creature in play, on your side no less. The problem is that you have no way to give that creature haste and thus won't be able to attack for the win. So yes, this means the [Magus of the Disk](#) is a sneaky red herring. Evil twins, it should be known, love red herrings. This puzzle is full of them.

Since you can't get rid of all the creatures, the next best step seems to be getting rid of all the creatures that can block one particular type of evasion. From glancing at the board, the evasion in question is clearly flying. Adam has four creatures capable of blocking a flier (the [Sprite Noble](#), two [Penumbra Spiders](#), and [Unyaro Bees](#)). If you can get rid of all of them (and remember that the [Penumbra Spiders](#) will replace themselves with a black token version), and get a flier or fliers with a combined four points of power, you can attack for the win.

This puzzle thus has two parts. Part one: Can you remove all of Adam's creatures that can block flying? Part two: Can you get enough power in fliers to win once you do? The answer luckily in both cases is yes, you can. How do you do that? Let's walk through the answer.

**1) Tap five plains and four islands. This will add fifteen white mana and four blue mana to your mana pool. Note that all but two of the white mana will be used to pay for generic mana costs.**



The reason you get so much white mana is that Adam's Gauntlets of Power are both set to white meaning you get three white mana every time you tap a plains (**Gauntlet of Power** affects all players' permanents). These two Gauntlets of Power will also prove to be valuable in another way later on.

**2) Pay 4 and play Fool's Demise on your Goblin Skycutter.**

You play **Fool's Demise** on the **Goblin Skycutter** because you need to use it twice, once to destroy one of Adam's creatures and once to destroy one of your own. This trick works because the **Goblin Skycutter's** ability doesn't require tapping and thus can be used the turn it comes into play.

**3) Pay 2 and put Griffin Guide on your Firemaw Kavu. It becomes a 6/4 flying creature.**

Every puzzle has a trick or two that you have to figure out. This is one of two such tricks in this puzzle (plus a third mini-trick). You need to destroy your own **Firemaw Kavu** because you want to trigger its leave play ability. By putting **Griffin Guide** on it you now make it a legal target for the **Goblin Skycutter's** ability. Yes, this alone won't destroy your **Firemaw Kavu**, but we'll get to that part momentarily.

**4) Sacrifice your Goblin Skycutter to deal 2 damage to your Firemaw Kavu. When Goblin Skycutter is put into the graveyard from play, Fool's Demise will return the Skycutter to play and the Fool's Demise will return to your hand.**

The hardest part about the trick to destroying your own **Firemaw Kavu** is that you want to use **Fool's Demise** on both your **Goblin Skycutter** and your **Firemaw Kavu**. Since your **Firemaw Kavu** isn't going to be destroyed until you remove the **Griffin Guide**, the **Fool's Demise** first goes on the **Goblin Skycutter**. For those of you that were thinking about using the **Goblin Skycutter** a second time to destroy the **Griffin Guided Firemaw Kavu**, it won't work because the **Goblin Skycutter's** ability also makes the creature lose flying.

**5) Pay 4 and play Fool's Demise on your Firemaw Kavu.**

The order of this is important because you want to have **Fool's Demise** on your **Firemaw Kavu** before it goes to the graveyard. This is crucial to getting extra damage in to destroy another of Adam's blockers.



**6) Pay 6 and tap Tolarian Sentinel (discarding Magus of the Disk) to return Griffin Guide to your hand. Once the Griffin Guide is removed, Firemaw Kavu reverts to being a 4/2. As it has 2 damage on it and its toughness has just been reduced to 2, the Firemaw Kavu is destroyed and is put into your graveyard. As it leaves play, have the Firemaw Kavu deal 4**

damage to the first **Penumbra Spider**. When the **Penumbra Spider** is put into the graveyard from play, a 2/4 black Spider token version of **Penumbra Spider** is put into play. **Fool's Demise** then returns **Firemaw Kavu** to play (without the **Eternity Snare**), and **Fool's Demise** goes to your hand. When **Firemaw** comes into play, have it deal 2 damage to itself causing it to destroy itself. As it leaves play, have **Firemaw Kavu** deal 4 damage to the black Spider token destroying it.

This is the megaplay. For starters, you return the **Griffin Guide** to your hand because it is the only way to destroy your **Firemaw Kavu**. You want to create the 2/2 Griffin token so you would have left it on the **Firemaw Kavu** if you could, but this is the only way available to destroy your **Firemaw Kavu** (using the resources not needed elsewhere). We'll solve that problem in a moment. When the **Firemaw Kavu** goes to the graveyard, by the way, make sure to put the **Fool's Demise** trigger on the stack before the **Firemaw** leaves play trigger. This will ensure that the black 2/4 spider token is there when the **Firemaw Kavu** returns to play (this is important as this is how you destroy the token).

Next comes the mini-trick. I call it a mini-trick because although the trick was built into the card design, many players are surprised when they see it used for the first time. The trick is to have **Firemaw Kavu** deal its comes-into-play damage to itself thus destroying it and creating the larger leaves play damage trigger.

Note that the card discarded to **Tolarian Sentinel** has to be **Magus of the Disk** as it's the only card you don't need to play. Yes, the puzzle did a number of sneaky things to make you focus on the **Magus of the Disk**. Once again, evil twin at work.

**7) Pitch (a.k.a. remove from the game) Fool's Demise to play Snapback without paying its mana cost. Use Snapback to return the second Penumbra Spider to Adam's hand.**

This is taking advantage of the **Fool's Demise**'s return. The way the mana plays out, you don't have what you need to play this spell normally. It's also important that you use the **Snapback** on one of the **Penumbra Spiders** because it allows you to keep it from getting the 2/4 black token (as the trigger is a "put into graveyard from play" trigger).



**8) Pay 2 and put Griffin Guide on your Goblin Skycutter.**

The second trick is figuring out what the **Vesuvan Shapeshifter** needs to copy. We've already talked about how the creature needs to be able to fly. There are numerous targets that fly (Adam's **Sprite Noble** and **Unyaro Bees** and your **Tolarian Sentinel**) but none of them add up to the necessary four

damage. This is where the Griffin token comes into play. Because it's a white creature, it will get +2/+2 due to Adam's two **Gauntlet of Power**. This makes it a 4/4 flier and a perfect target for the **Vesuvan Shapeshifter**.

But in order to copy the Griffin token, you have to first get it into play. This means you have to enchant a creature that is then put into the graveyard. It turns out that the easiest way to do that is to put it on the **Goblin Skycutter** before you sacrifice it for its effect. You had to wait until the second time you sacrificed the **Goblin Skycutter** as the **Griffin Guide** had to be on the **Firemaw Kavu** the first time you sacrificed it.

**9) Sacrifice **Goblin Skycutter** to deal 2 damage to Adam's **Sprite Noble**, destroying it. As it leaves play, **Unyaro Bees** reverts to being a 0/1 creature. When **Goblin Skycutter** goes to the graveyard, **Griffin Guide** puts a 2/2 white flying Griffin creature token into play under your control. Because of Adam's two **Gauntlet of Power**, it is a 4/4 creature.**

You have to destroy the **Sprite Noble** first because otherwise your **Prodigal Sorcerer** cannot destroy the **Unyaro Bees**. And look, you got your Griffin token into play.

**10) Tap **Prodigal Sorcerer** to deal 1 damage to Adam's **Unyaro Bees**, destroying it.**

My evil twin included **Prodigal Sorcerer** in the puzzle because it seems so tempting to copy, especially with Adam at only 4 life.

**11) Pay 1 to turn **Vesuvan Shapeshifter** face up. As it turns face up copy the white Griffin token. **Vesuvan Shapeshifter** is now a 4/4 flying white creature.**

To answer the question of the puzzle's title – “Copy That” means copy the Griffin token.



**12) Attack with **Vesuvan Shapeshifter** to deal 4 damage to Adam.**

And Adam goes down. Take that, Adam.

My evil twin always names the opponents in the puzzle after friends and family. Adam is my two-year old son (he's one of the twins, if you pay attention to the minute trivia of my life – hmm, twins... like father, like son). My evil twin hasn't done a puzzle since Adam was born. (And yes, the next puzzle he does will most likely have Sarah as an opponent.)

There you go. That's how the cookie crumbles. I hope you enjoyed our little throwback to **Magic: the Puzzling** (Check out old *Duelists* for more – you can even look on eBay to buy a copy of a **Magic: the Puzzling** book I did many years ago). Due to my and my evil twin's busy schedules overseeing **Magic** design, we haven't had the time to do puzzles for the last few years. I'll speak for both of us when I say that it was fun stretching these old muscles. Before I end, I do want to thank Mark Gottlieb, Alan Comer and especially Mike Turian for helping me proofread the puzzle. Creating puzzles that both work and have only one solution is much harder than you might imagine.

For more fun, try removing Adam's two auras from your creatures ([Aspect of Mongoose](#) and [Eternity Snare](#)) and see how many other solutions you can find. There are quite a few.

Thanks for playing,

The “good” Mark Rosewater