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CARD OF THE DAY - JANUARY, 2007

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By Wizards of the Coast

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Card of the Day - mercredi 31 janvier 2007



Vampiric Link

Planar Chaos common. As befits an ability that has swapped back and forth between white and black, the Kev Walker art for Vampiric Link is a dark mirror image. The *Ninth Edition* Spirit Link art, also by Kev Walker, shows a white-aligned mage imbuing a batlike creature with crackling life energy. Vampiric Link takes the scene and turns it on its head, showing a similar creature, now black-aligned, attacking the same white mage and draining his life away.

Card of the Day - mardi 30 janvier 2007



Prodigal Pyromancer

Planar Chaos common. Prodigal Pyromancer was known in design as "Tom," a riff on Prodigal Sorcerer's nickname, "Tim." It's one of a few timeshifted cards in *Planar Chaos* that would also be printed in that color if they appeared in a "normal" set. They represent intersections between the current "normal" color pie and the *Planar Chaos* color pie, as illustrated by cards printed in the "wrong" color in the past. Thanks to the Pyromancer, such cards became known as "Toms."

Card of the Day - lundi 29 janvier 2007



Hedge Troll

Planar Chaos uncommon. In the *Planar Chaos* color pie, white gets regeneration. In both the "normal" color pie and in *Planar Chaos*, green is best at pumping creatures. The design team found that both of Sedge Troll's abilities had shifted since it was printed, but not to the same color. Thus, Hedge Troll became the only *Planar Chaos* timeshifted card that "double-shifted" in this fashion; the other color-related text changes are either unchanged (Mycologist), self-referential (Sunlance), or mirrored (Dunerider Outlaw).

Card of the Day - vendredi 26 janvier 2007



Keen Sense

Planar Chaos uncommon. Compare the art of the original Curiosity to the "timeshifted" Keen Sense – it's a scene between the same two characters played out very differently. In the Curiosity art, Mirri is about to attack Crovax after he has killed the dark angel Selenia and triggered the curse of vampirism. This attack leads to her death. (Curiosity did, after all, kill the cat.) On Keen Sense, the scene has been twisted; Mirri has been cursed, and the still-noble Crovax flees rather than attempting to kill her.

Card of the Day - jeudi 25 janvier 2007



Pyrohemia

Planar Chaos uncommon. "Pyrohemia" comes from the Greek roots for "fire" and "blood," so its name means "blood of fire" or "fire in the blood." Ouch. When it was decided to timeshift Pestilence, there was some discussion over whether it should be uncommon or rare. Its effect on Limited is significant (read: insane) enough that it could be justified as a rare, but it remained uncommon because the original card had been printed mostly at common (!) and some at uncommon (and the uncommon Pyrohemia passed Development muster).

Card of the Day - mercredi 24 janvier 2007



Damnation

Planar Chaos rare. **Magicthegathering.com** content manager Scott Johns pointed out a neat detail in Damnation's art that many members of R&D had missed. Where the *Ninth Edition* Wrath of God art by Kev Walker shows people and debris being blown away from a sphere of light, Damnation's art, also by Kev Walker, shows people and debris being sucked into a sphere of darkness. So Damnation sucks where Wrath of God blows, but both of them rock. If you follow.

Card of the Day - mardi 23 janvier 2007



Piracy Charm

Planar Chaos common. The *Planar Chaos* charms were originally designed with a simple idea in mind: Like all charms, they would each have three abilities – representing in this case the core, mantle, and crust of each color's slice of the pie (as explained in Mark Rosewater's article Chaos Theory). The initial plan was to design all five charms from scratch, but it soon became apparent that the black Funeral Charm could be timeshifted verbatim to illustrate blue's *Planar Chaos* beat. The charm cycle is thus unusual in having one of its members timeshifted and the other four normal.

Card of the Day - lundi 22 janvier 2007



Calciderm

Planar Chaos uncommon. Calciderm caused a debate over how much cards could be changed and still be considered "timeshifted." Blastoderm had fading, but *Planar Chaos* contains vanishing, the "fixed" fading. Allowing Calciderm to persist as the one fading card in the set was judged to be less desirable than giving the timeshifted Blastoderm a slightly different functionality, and so fading 3 became the equivalent vanishing 4.

Card of the Day - vendredi 19 janvier 2007



Illusions of Grandeur

Ice Age rare. Although this card is famous for its role in the format-dominating Trix deck (based on giving it to your opponent with Donate so that you get the life gain but they get the life loss), it deserves some recognition for a clever and amusing illustration. Look carefully at the art: A clever mage hides behind a rock, crafting an illusion that makes a harmless and adorable bunny look like a huge and imposing dragon. The mage's enemies quail at the prospect of fighting such a beast. The concept breaks down a bit when Donate is added to the mix, but that's hardly Illusions of Grandeur's fault.

Card of the Day - jeudi 18 janvier 2007



Stream of Life


Alpha common. Stream of Life is one of only a handful of cards whose printed text – card name, type line, and text box – has remained the same in every core set from Alpha through *Ninth Edition*. Any “Summon” cards would now read “Creature,” interrupts are now instants, and many templates have changed, but “Target player gains X life” has been a constant.

Card of the Day - mercredi 17 janvier 2007



Essence Drain

Darksteel common. Drain Life effects are a long-time staple of black. Although typically the color of life loss rather than life gain, black can gain life when it does so by taking life from, or dealing damage to, something else. That's all well and good, but if *Lightning Helix* is any indication, Essence Drain could have an alternate play cost of

 Red Mar

 White Mar

– well, if the alternate play cost let you play it as an instant. Black has always been able to do on its own what red and white can do only by working together (albeit cheaper and faster – there are certain perks to being multicolored).

Card of the Day - mardi 16 janvier 2007



Faith's Fetters

Ravnica common. As noted in a previous Card of the Day, Faith's Fetters started life with “enchant creature” rather than “enchant permanent,” matching the other four members of the cycle of common auras with comes-into-play effects in *Ravnica* (Galvanic Arc, Flight of Fancy, etc.). Late in development, however, Fetters was changed to enchant any permanent, loosening the cycle but providing a Constructed tool to fight Umezawa's Jitte and the ten uncommon guild lands with activated abilities.

Card of the Day - lundi 15 janvier 2007



Game of Chaos

Ice Age rare. Other than X spells such as Fireball, there are very few instants or sorceries in Magic that can deal all 20 damage by themselves. Game of Chaos (along with Mana Clash) is among them, although the odds of winning 5 flips in a row to deal 20 (and gain 20) with Game of Chaos are only 1 in 32.

Card of the Day - vendredi 12 janvier 2007



Wrath of God

Alpha rare. Wrath of God is one of a select group of simple base set cards that do not have flavor text (and in some editions have had their rules text centered) in order to emphasize their simple and iconic nature. The only time Wrath of God has ever received flavor text was a real-world literary quote in *Portal*. The quote? *“As flies to wanton boys, so are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport.”* —William Shakespeare, King Lear

Card of the Day - jeudi 11 janvier 2007



Ball Lightning

The Dark rare. A ball of living lightning would certainly be conceived as an Elemental these days (and indeed, it may yet become one as creature types continue to be revisited), but in the old days, Ball Lightning was simply "Summon Ball Lightning." It's fun to watch its text box shrink over time, too, from the original 6 lines to 5 lines in *Fourth* and *Fifth Editions*, to 3 lines in the Beatdown boxed set, and finally to the 2 lines of its current Oracle wording.

Card of the Day - mercredi 10 janvier 2007



Drop of Honey

Arabian Nights rare. Like most cards from *Arabian Nights*, Drop of Honey was based on a story. In a common version of the story, a drop of honey falls on the ground, a fly eats the honey, a bird goes for the fly, a dog goes for the bird, and so on up the chain until two kings and their provinces have gone to war. All well and good, but why does green, vying with blue for the title of worst creature kill color, get to act it out? The flavor is related to cards like Survival of the Fittest, demonstrating the grimmer side of the natural cycle – though that flavor is brought through differently in recent sets.

Card of the Day - mardi 9 janvier 2007



Blastoderm

Nemesis common. Different abilities “scale” differently with size – each ability changes in power as the creature it's on gets bigger. Untargetability is one that scales very well. An untargetable 1/1 will likely die in combat anyway, but a big creature that doesn't die to spot removal can rule the board – one reason why they have been relatively scarce in recent years (with big, splashy exceptions like Simic Sky Swallower).

Card of the Day - lundi 8 janvier 2007



Muscle Sliver

Tempest common. Muscle Sliver caused a big fight in R&D; it would be the first card that would be flat-out better than Grizzly Bears, with a beneficial ability and the same cost and stats. Unless your opponent was playing Slivers, Muscle Sliver would simply be a better choice, as the second copy would be vastly better than the second copy of Grizzly Bears. Ultimately, of course, it was decided that Grizzly Bears wasn't the benchmark after all, as subsequent cards such as Ashcoat Bears, Humble Budoka, and (perhaps a bit over the top) Wild Mongrel illustrate.

Card of the Day - vendredi 5 janvier 2007



Sigil of the New Dawn

Onslaught rare. White is no stranger to bringing cards back from the graveyard or stopping them from getting there. Over the years, it has regenerated creatures with Death Ward and Daru Mender, brought them straight back into play with Resurrection, returned them to their owners' hand when they die with Sigil of the New Dawn and Enduring Renewal, even let them regenerate themselves automatically like Knight and Clergy of the Holy Nimbus. It's interesting to note, then, that white has never had a creature, like black's Drudge Skeletons, with the standard regeneration ability (and no, Spectral Lynx and Votary of the Conclave don't count, as they both dipped into other colors).

Will white ever get a "normal" regenerator? Only time will tell!

Card of the Day - jeudi 4 janvier 2007



Treva, the Renewer

Invasion rare. Treva and the other three-color legendary Dragons from *Invasion* began life as an homage to the original Elder Dragon Legends from *Legends*. Of course, cool as they were, the Legends Dragon Legends were actually pretty bad, with only Nicol Bolas actually *doing* anything for its exorbitant cost. Treva and the other *Invasion* Dragons started out as big flyers with powerful activated abilities, but the Development team soon found that they were sitting back and using their abilities rather than doing what gigantic Dragons are born to do: Attack! The switch to damage triggers echoed Nicol Bolas and made sure that Treva and friends spend plenty of time turning sideways.

Card of the Day - mercredi 3 janvier 2007



Stonewood Invoker

Legions common. R&D uses many tricks to make Limited games more interesting, one of which is giving players something to do in the late game when they have tons of mana but may be low on cards. Though cards like this sometimes make a splash in Constructed, they are generally designed and developed primarily for the role they play in 40-card decks. The Invoker cycle from *Legions* was designed and developed with this goal in mind, offering reasonably costed creatures with huge rewards in the endgame. Stonewood Invoker has the stats of Grizzly Bears, a good man in Limited, with the added bonus of casting a no-frills Stonewood Invocation on himself if you build up to 8 mana.

Card of the Day - mardi 2 janvier 2007



Enduring Renewal

Time Spiral "timeshifted". Of all the cards on the *Time Spiral* timeshifted sheet, Enduring Renewal was the one that worried R&D the most, and it was almost pulled from the set due to power level concerns. The first time around, the card had been abused with 0-cost creatures and Goblin Bombardment in an Extended deck called Fruity Pebbles (incidentally spawning a succession of cereal-related deck names such as Cocoa Pebbles, Trix, Full English Breakfast, and, debatably, Life). The fear was that a similar deck could arise – in Standard, no less – using Wild Cantor and Grapeshot. Ultimately, though, Enduring Renewal was unleashed on the world... only to find that Dragonstorm had beaten it to the breakfast table in the deck that won the 2006 World Championships.

Card of the Day - lundi 1 janvier 2007



Wormfang Newt

Judgment common. The black and red Nightmares from *Torment* (such as Mesmeric Fiend and Petraddon) had beneficial abilities, removing cards or resources of an opponent's from the game and then returning them when the Nightmare left play (or not, if one took advantage of a loophole by removing the Nightmare from play with its comes-into-play trigger still on the stack). The blue and red Nightmares of *Judgment* (such as Wormfang Newt and Worldgorger Dragon) introduced a twist on this ability as a drawback, removing their controllers' cards or resources from the game until they left play (unless, of course, the opponent took advantage of a loophole...).

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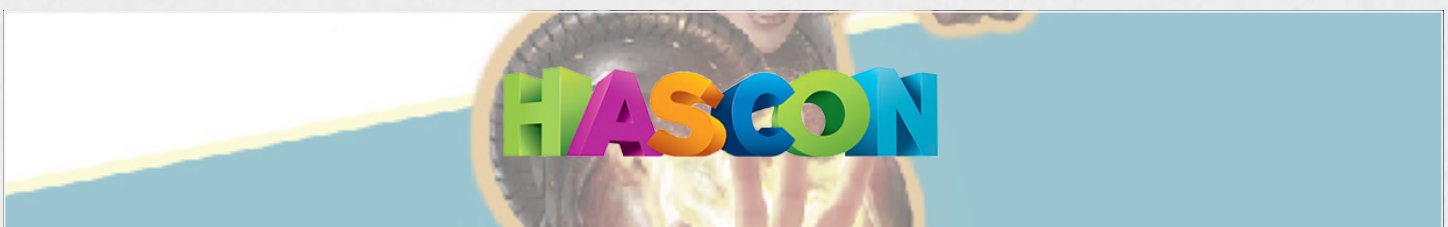
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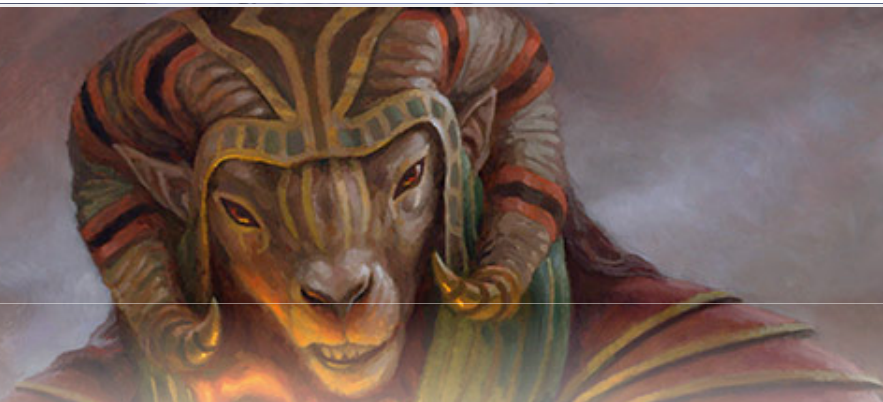
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