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Behind The Cardboard

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Taste the Magic
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When a **Magic** card comes off the assembly line looking all spiffy, it feels pretty good to have had a hand in its creation. I've been lucky enough to get that feeling from cards I have illustrated over the last 8 years. I've even had the supreme luck of being able to watch cards that I have designed roll out onto the showroom floor. That feels cool too. But, for some reason, nothing gives me more pride than looking at the cards that sport the best work of the names and flavor text team.

As the fortunate Wizard who has played skipper to the writing team, it makes sense that I would feel the most pride when admiring the part of the cards in which I was most involved. While designing *Future Sight* cards was darn cool, I was still just one of Rosewater's toadies, and while working one the development team, I was pretty much the random dude called upon for the layman's (read: scrub's) opinion. But with names and flavor text, the ship was mine to sink or sail.

Since it's "Behind the Cardboard" Week, I am going to show off some of the *Future Sight* work of the talented writers who sweat and labor anonymously in the background. Because I think they deserve to be less anonymous, here are the names of the folks who contributed to the tasty verbiage of *Future Sight*: Brady Dommermuth, Doug Beyer, Garrett Baumgartner, Elye Alexander, Christa Knott-Dufresne, Adam Lee, Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar, Rei Nakazawa, and Jake Theis. Brady Dommermuth was not an official part of the names and flavor text team, but since his placeholder names so often run the gauntlet all the way to the print shop, I think he deserves a plug. Doug Beyer was also not an official member of the writing team, but he was a tremendous help to me in identifying and honing the name and flavor text winners. He also piloted the insane *Future Sight* keyword ship while I was off paddling the Development dinghy. All of these folks made me proud, and here are some of their finest efforts:

Grove of the Burnwillows

Spring is the most beautiful season in the grove, when the new leaves open from their ember-buds in a race of leaping flames.

That's a dandy little passage. I enjoy the way it sounds like the hyperbole of a real-world nature writer—but here Elye Alexander is just tellin' it like it is. "Ember buds" was the clincher for me on this one. While the whole package was good, this term grabbed me instantly. This piece was an easy winner. And the name was one of the placeholders that was cool (or, in this case, hot) enough to go the distance.



Magus of the Moon

Tidal forces of the blood moon wrench and buckle the land, drawing monoliths of stone and soil toward the flaming orb.

This flavor text by Adam Lee is like a pitch for a two-minute short film. It describes a scene in motion, while perfectly capturing the mechanic of the card. I can just see it, the moon making its silent summons, calling up the stone spires as they pierce through the plane's surface. Sweeeeet.



Bonded Fetch

A well-made homunculus grooms the mind of its master, pruning the thoughts that lead to madness. Few loredealers survive the study of the infinite without one.

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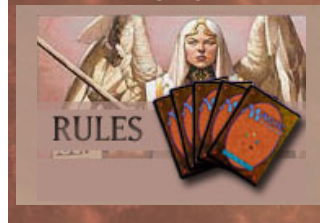
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RULES



I love the Fetch. I remember reading the name submission and thinking "Ha! I don't know what that means, but for some reason, I like it!" Just liking it is not always enough to crown a champion, so I looked it up and found out that it is a British word for an apparition or doppelganger. Winner!

It is always nice when a writer surprises me with something outside the lines a bit. Garrett did that here, and then followed it up with the flavor text as well. My favorite pieces are the ones that not only explain/support the mechanic of the card, but also add a little storytelling of their own. This one does that very well, introducing us to loredelvers, their mind-wrenching studies, and their little pink pals who help them retain their sanity.

Nix

Nix is a sketchy card that few will take much time to enjoy. I want to mention it here because I am still tickled whenever I read the card's little well-packaged name. I have mentioned name packaging before, way, way back in an article called [Say My Name](#).

Here's a quick blurb that sums it up:

Fog does a great job of packaging the spell in a very small box. Its tiny, three letter name reflects the tiny 1 mana cost of the spell, as well as the one-liner in the text box. ... It's a snappy spell with a snappy effect and a snappy little name.



Nix works the same magic, summing up the simple spell in just three letters. "Nix" is most commonly used as a verb meaning "to prohibit"—perfect for a counterspell.

What's even cooler about it is that it can be used as a noun meaning "nothing." (It's a derivation of the German word "nichts," which means "nothing.") That little bit of wonderful coincidence plays perfectly with the card's mechanic. This card name was a discovery Doug Beyer and I made late in the game, after writing had officially ended. I am glad we did not settle, and continued to search for gold.

Bitter Ordeal

This card has no flavor text, but I love the name alone enough to mention it here. Like Nix, this name was a result of some last-minute collaboration between Doug and me. Sometimes a looming deadline can be inspiring. The sweet thing about it (apologies for the pun) is that "Bitter" could apply to both the victim and the caster of the spell. "Ordeal" is perfect because the gravestorm mechanic indicates that, even though the spell itself may be short and sweet (there it is again), the whole.... um... Bitter Ordeal began when stuff started dying.

Mistmeadow Skulk

Doyo suspected the boggarts of brewing a plot against his crop, so he scythed away his grain to clear the sightlines.

Oh, poor deluded Doyo, cutting off his nose to spite his face. This piece thoroughly describes in just one sentence the depth of this kithkin's paranoia. Three cheers for Doug Beyer, who whipped up this winner while I sat and witnessed the argument about whether this card should cost 2 or 1. It's a good thing Doug was around.



Oh my goodness, what do we call that thing? It's a Hershey's Kiss with an eye. Hey wait, is it smiling too?

My records don't show me what the name suggestions were for this, but I do remember the fact that none of them seemed to capture the "huh?" of this creature...until I cut my ringer loose on the project. Whenever I want a doozy I just spin around in my seat and challenge Brady to come up with one. His late-inning heroics (that I remember off the top of my head) include Helldozer, Street Savvy, and yes, **Unblinking Bleb**. According to the dictionary, a bleb is a bubble or serous vesicle. According to us, a Bleb is a smiling lump with an eye.

Gift of Granite

The blessing adds both protection to the recipient and weightlessness to the stone.

I enjoy the simplicity of this piece by Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar, plainly explaining how stone-covered arms could be a good thing. I find it particularly beneficial when comparing these encased arms with those shown in another *Future Sight* card, **Leaden Fists**. Both spells are simple auras, but *this* one is a blessing. It's almost like **Gift of Granite's** flavor text also adds flavor to **Leaden Fists**.

This spell's energy is concentrated in the movement of matter. Once in place, the magic gives way to the heavy weight of nature.



Barren Glory

This name had to be good. In order to shake the smell of **The Cheese Stands Alone**, this one had to play it straight and play it well. I think it kicked ass and came out smelling rosy. It has the big sort of feel that a card with "you win the game" on it should have. At the same time, that bigness befits the vast emptiness of the card concept and the card art. This was one of those cards that, going in, I knew I wanted something big and strong—like a heavy metal anthem. **Damnation** was like that, and I was super stoked when Christa busted out that dark, heavy one-worder. Elye Alexander swooped in with his cape and quill to create this fist-pumping name. Rei Nakazawa, making use of his utility belt, penned this dandy piece of flavor text:

"The only perfect world is an empty world, with no one to sin or wage war." —Tarran, magus of the disk

This is a sad statement, but it does hold truth for the glass-half-empty crowd. Of course, an optimist would say that a perfect world is devoid of just bad things, not everything. But we're not reading the words of just any random dude. These are the words of Tarran, a **Magus of the Disk**. Coming from someone whose idea of helping out is wiping out, this statement seems less like the pathetic musings of a pessimist and more like the aspiration of a (slightly mad) perfectionist. Awesome stuff, and a very cool connection to another card.

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Artists are lucky chaps—getting their names on the cardboard for each card they illustrate. But there are plenty of other folks who grind it out in anonymity for the betterment of cardboard. Name and flavor text writers are some of these grinders. I enjoy showcasing their work here at TTM. Since it's "Behind the Cardboard" Week, I think it was appropriate to share with you some of their printed work *and* their unprinted names. Since your faves may not be the same as mine, here's a list of all *Future Sight* cards with flavor text and the names of the writers. (Card names are a trickier deal—we often combine the submissions of two or more writers to get the best names. Also, you'd probably get quite bored of seeing Brady's name thirty times or more.) Some cards may have been a team effort or combination of the work of multiple writers. In these cases, I'll chalk it up to "the team."

Elye Alexander	Christa Knott-Dufresne	Rei Nakazawa
Magus of the Moat	Augur <i>il-Vec</i>	Heartwood Storyteller
Samite Censer-Bearer	Aven Augur	Llanowar Augur
Scourge of Kher Ridges	Pooling Venom	Barren Glory
Veilstone Amulet	Glittering Wish	Sliver Legion
Cloud Key	Patrician's Scorn	Force of Savagery
Bound in Silence	Steamflogger Boss	Magus of the Vineyard
Grinning Ignus	Spellwild Ouphe	Pact of Negation
Bloodshot Trainee		Second Wind
Graven Cairns	Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar	Narcomoeba
Grove of the Burnwillows	Emberwilde Augur	Street Wraith
Horizon Canopy	Lost Hours	Witch's Mist

	Scout's Warning	Zoetic Cavern
Garrett Baumgartner	Augur of Skulls	
Sliversmith	Rift Elemental	
Slaughter Pact	Stronghold Rats	Matt Cavotta
Venser's Diffusion	Quiet Disrepair	Rites of Flourishing
Even the Odds	Gift of Granite	Magus of the Future
Cutthroat <i>ii</i> -Dal	Char-Rumbler	Venser, Shaper Savant
Lumithread Field	Minions' Murmurs	Riftsweeper
Bonded Fetch	Whip-Spine Drake	Lymph Sliver
Arcanum Wings	Frenzy Sliver	Sarcomite Myr
Nix	Flowstone Embrace	Ghostfire
Storm Entity	Emblem of the Warmind	River of Tears
Tarox Bladewing	Imperiosaur	
Edge of Autumn	Phosphorescent Feast	The Team
	Dryad Arbor	Akroma's Memorial
Adam Lee		Wrap in Vigor
Grave Peril	Doug Beyer	Lucent Liminid
Magus of the Moon	Foresee	Ramosian Revivalist
Yixlid Jailer	Magus of the Abyss	Thornweald Archer
Muraganda Petroglyphs	Mistmeadow Skulk	Centaur Omenreader
Nimbus Maze		

If you like the work of any of these fine folks, please pop over to the message boards and give them a little pat on the back.

*Matt Cavotta has always been a fantasy goober. At various points in his gooberhood, he has used his nerdy knowledge to become a professional goober. He went from scribbling pictures of his own **D&D** characters to illustrating books and cards for his two favorite games; **D&D** and **Magic**. Then he channeled his inner 7th level Illusionist/3rd level Bard and landed himself a job at Wizards as a writer. He continues to cast his illusion spells each morning, lest they find out he's just another goober.*



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