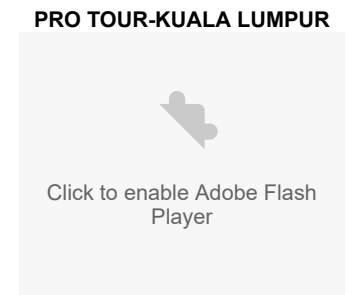
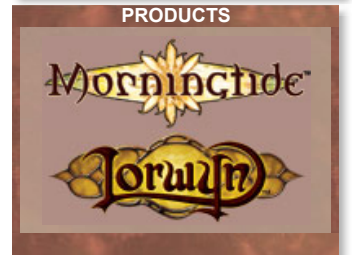


[Games](#)[Books](#)[Community](#)[Events](#)[Help](#)[Articles](#)[Search](#)[MAGICTHEGATHERING.COM](#)[ARCHIVES](#)[TOURNAMENT CENTER](#)[MAGIC ONLINE](#)[GATHERER](#)[Home](#) > [Games](#) > [Magic](#) > [Magicthegathering.com](#)[Ask Wizards](#)

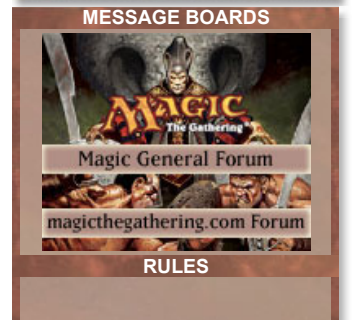
Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Ask Wizards - September, 2007

Do you have a question about **Magic: The Gathering** or *Wizards of the Coast*? Send it, along with your name and location, to us via this [email form](#). We'll post a new question and answer each day.



[Day Three Wrap](#)
[Top 8 Video Archive](#)



September 28, 2007

Q: I can see how the flavor text and artwork on **Warped Devotion** (the Planeshift version) work together. I can see Urza and Gerrard kneeling before the mighty Yawgmooth. But what I don't get is why would these do-gooders be bowing down to someone of the dark side? What am I not getting here?
—Bret, Great Lakes, IL, USA

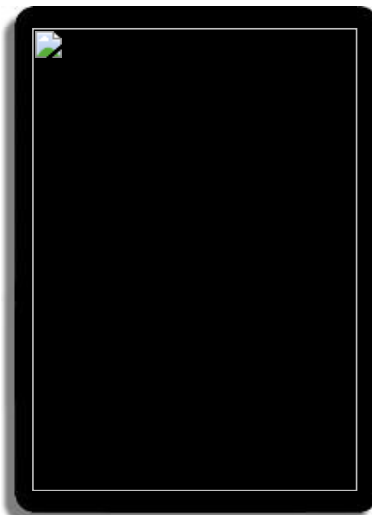
A: From **Doug Beyer**, Magic Creative Team:

The scene shown on **Warped Devotion** is indeed a dark time for the heroes.

Toward the end of the *Planeshift* novel, Yawgmooth's power is vast, and his influence has spread, finally, to Urza and Gerrard. Yawgmooth tempts Urza with a vision of his brother Mishra, promising to release Mishra from his suffering in Phyrexia if Urza will only submit to Yawgmooth's will. Urza so submits, prostrating himself on Yawgmooth's black dais.

Soon after, Yawgmooth tempts Gerrard with a vision of Hanna, promising that she and Gerrard can be together again only if he, too, becomes Yawgmooth's servant. Gerrard acquiesces, and pledges himself to the Dark Lord, kneeling on the dais right next to Urza.

Meanwhile Crovax has become evincar of Rath, Ertai has become "completed" (invasively modified by the Phyrexians), and Squee is dead (again). Bad times. In the *Apocalypse* novel, it falls to Sisay, Karn, and the shattered remains of the *Weatherlight* crew to save Urza and Gerrard, and all of Dominaria.



September 27, 2007

Q: How do you tell the difference between cards from the *Revised Edition* and the *Unlimited Edition*?
—Walt, Cheltenham, PA, USA

A: From **Mike Turian**, Magic R&D:

Hi Walt.

To start, I looked at the *Unlimited* **Prodigal Sorcerer** and the *Revised* **Prodigal Sorcerer** in [Gatherer](#).





Since you asked, I dug out the old *Complete Encyclopedia of Magic: The Gathering* to find out the official differences between the two.

Under the heading "Revised Edition," the encyclopedia says: "These cards have white borders and can be distinguished from other white-bordered editions by the absence of the beveled edge on the card. The set introduced a tilted "T" in place of the word "tap" and was the only English version to use it. Also, a change in the films in this printing caused many Revised Edition cards to look lighter or faded compared to *Unlimited Edition*, *Fourth Edition*, and *Fifth Edition* cards."

In reference to the "bevel," the encyclopedia says that *Unlimited Edition* cards "are distinguished from other white-bordered cards by the presence of a thick, black line around the beveled edge."

Hope this helps,

Mike

September 26, 2007



Q: Why don't planeswalkers tap? Most "you can play this once per turn" abilities involve tapping (attacking creatures, lands). The only permanent that doesn't tap is enchantment (ignoring *Future Sight*, that is). Considering that planeswalkers can only play their ability once on our turn, how come they don't tap?
—Bass, Folkestone, Kent, UK

A: From Mark Rosewater, **Magic** head designer:

Bass,

Here are a few of the reasons:

1. We wanted planeswalkers to use their abilities only once per turn. If we used a tap to restrict this, then any effect that untapped "target permanent" (and there's more of them than you realize) would allow you to use the planeswalker's abilities multiple times.
2. There were some layout issues as we wanted to put the loyalty costs in the up and down shield symbols, and adding a tap symbol would not have looked good.
3. We were trying to distance the planeswalkers from creatures, and we believed having three tap abilities would make them feel more creature-like.
4. We wanted the planeswalkers to be able to use the abilities the turn they were played and we felt that tapping was more likely to lead players to believe that they couldn't use them.

I hope that gives you some insight into our choice to not have planeswalkers tap to use their abilities.

September 25, 2007



Q: Back when I first started playing, when *Fourth Edition* was fairly new, *Amrou Kithkin* was one of the first cards to bring out the Johnny in me. So I was pleased when I heard that Kithkin would be one of the races in Lorwyn—but ever since hearing the announcement I've been waiting for Amrou to be mentioned... so far fruitlessly. Lorwyn may be a new world, but obviously some Kithkin made it to Dominaria long ago—back in *Legends*, actually. So will we ever hear the story of *Amrou Kithkin*, and how she (and apparently some other Kithkin, given that their presumed descendants are seen in *Time Spiral* and *Future Sight*) ended up on Dominaria?
—Bryan, Renton, WA, USA

A: From Doug Beyer, **Magic** creative team:

It's not known whether kithkin originated on Lorwyn, originated on Dominaria, originated in some third place, or appeared independently on multiple planes. We know that the kithkin race existed on Dominaria thousands of years ago, and that the time rifts brought some of them, known as Amrou kithkin, forward to the modern era (as represented by Amrou Scout and Amrou Seekers). We know that the ancestral home of Amrou kithkin (a place called Amrou Haven) was destroyed, presumably by the wars and apocalypses that ravaged the plane.

It's unclear whether the Amrou even survived between then and now, or what became of the timeshifted Amrou survivors after the events of *Time Spiral*.



Amrou: then and now

The Amrou are but one cultural group of Dominarian kithkin. Although they share a race and some physical characteristics with Lorwyn kithkin—they're quick and agile, and are squat in proportion relative to humans—the Amrou have their own culture, laws, and customs unique to Dominaria. Lorwyn kithkin have important differences—[the magic of thoughtweft](#), for example—that set them apart. There is no known place called "Amrou Haven" on Lorwyn, or any other easy clue that shows a link between the two groups. Furthermore, the history of Lorwyn is shrouded in mystery; it may be a much younger plane than Dominaria, or much older! While it's possible that there's a relationship between Lorwyn kithkin and the Amrou of Dominaria, we just don't have enough evidence to say whether one gave rise to the other. It's one of those stories that will, for the time being, have to remain untold.

September 24, 2007 – Magic Rules Corner



Q: The rules for the static ability "evoked" create a triggered ability as well. So if a creature was evoked into play and the "sacrifice this" ability went on the stack, could the creature be **Momentary Blink**ed to save it from being sacrificed, making the triggered evoked point to a null creature?

–Kevin, Asheville, NC, USA

A: From the [magicthegathering.com](#) Rules Corner:

Frank's [preview article](#) for Cloudthresher included the complete rules and FAQ entry for evoked, but there was still a lot of disagreement on the message boards concerning whether the evoked trigger can be responded to with cards like **Momentary Blink**.

But wait, back up. What does evoked do? Let's look at part of its *Lorwyn* FAQ entry in case you missed it:

Evoked represents two abilities: a static ability that functions in any zone from which the card can be played, and a triggered ability that functions in play. "Evoked [cost]" means "You may play this card by paying [cost] rather than paying its mana cost" and "When this permanent comes into play, if its evoked cost was paid, its controller sacrifices it." Paying a card's evoked cost follows the rules for paying alternative costs in rules 409.1b and 409.1f.

- When you play a spell for its evoked cost, you really are playing the spell—you're just paying a different cost. The spell can be countered as normal. Effects that prevent you from playing a spell also prevent you from playing the spell with evoked.
- Each *Lorwyn* creature with evoked has a comes-into-play ability. That means paying the normal cost gets you both the ability and the creature, while paying the evoked cost just gets you the ability.
- Playing a creature by paying its evoked cost will result in two comes-into-play abilities: The sacrifice ability from evoked, and whatever other ability the creature has. The creature's controller chooses in what order to put them on the stack. Both abilities can be responded to as normal.

That last sentence is the most relevant here. It means that the answer to your question is yes! Here's why:

Evoked creates a triggered ability that causes the creature it's on to be sacrificed if its evoked cost was paid. (If the creature was put into play any other way, that ability won't even trigger.) The sacrifice trigger can be responded to by sacrificing the creature to pay for some other ability (say, that of **Nantuko Husk**), returning it to its owner's hand (with **Unsummon** or similar), giving control of it to another player somehow (in which case it's still sacrificed), hitting it with **Momentary Blink**, or using any other spell or ability you could normally play in response to a trigger. The fact that this trigger causes a sacrifice might make it look like a cost, but that isn't the case. If you sacrifice a creature to **Nantuko Husk**, you can't sacrifice it to anything else. But triggered abilities can always be responded to, so this sacrifice doesn't work like sacrifices that pay a cost.

Let's say you do **Momentary Blink** the creature with the sacrifice trigger still on the stack (the other comes-into-play trigger may already have

resolved or not; doesn't matter). When **Momentary Blink** resolves, the creature is removed from the game and returned to play in a single action, but the game sees it as an entirely new creature. When the sacrifice trigger resolves, the creature it refers to is no longer in play to be sacrificed; instead, a shiny new creature has come into play. That creature's other (non-voke) comes-into-play ability triggers (just as it did when the creature came into play the first time), but the trigger that causes it to be sacrificed never happens—because *this* creature wasn't put into play by having its evoke cost paid.

Momentary Blink isn't in *Lorwyn*, but odds are that if you keep your eyes open at the [Prerelease](#) and [Release Events](#), you'll find some fun things to do with your evoke creatures when you aren't planning on keeping them around anyway.

Note: The fact that the first two weeks of Rules Corner both feature **Momentary Blink** says more about **Momentary Blink** than it does about Rules Corner. Check back next week for a possibly non-**Momentary Blink**-related question and answer!



September 21, 2007



Q: I was reading the MTG Floor rules, Sec. 122, and I found something surprising:

"Players may look at their sideboards during a game only if the sideboard remains distinguishable from other cards."

What!? Now this gets me excited! It was intentional, right? I think it's about time for this to have been implemented. However, I am curious as to what finally prompted this policy change regarding sideboards.
—Greg, Storrs, CT, USA

A: From **Andy Heckt**, DCI Judge Manager:

It was indeed intentional, as a result of the game's continuing evolution.

Firstly, the rule against looking at your sideboard came from a desire to restrict opportunities for cheating. Your opponent shouldn't have to worry about you randomly handling cards from outside the game while he's playing. It's a distraction to monitor and not the most sporting behavior. Then Wishes (such as **Cunning Wish**) came into existence, and a need for a rule to make them work within tournaments was created allowing you to look at your sideboard as an effect of a Wish. Then the penalty guide was redesigned, and Outside Assistance included, "A player illegally seeks information that is hidden from them by the rules of the game or format." This rule is to prevent peeking in draft, looking through your library, etc... but this also meant that when a player with a Wish wanted to remind himself of what was in his sideboard before playing the spell, he was intentionally violating the rule that prohibited them—which is cheating, resulting in disqualifications.

Since there now existed a reason to look at the sideboard (Wishes), we decided to allow doing so, just so long as they remain entirely distinguishable from cards in play. I recommend players remove their sideboard from sleeves or place them in different colored sleeves to assist in keeping them distinguished, rather than relying upon distance from other cards.

September 20, 2007



Q: When "Jelly" comes out, is *Time Spiral* Block (and *Coldsnap*) rotating out of Standard? Isn't that a bit too soon?

—James D., Ottawa, ON, Canada

A: From **Kelly Digges**, editor of [magicthegathering.com](#):

The answer to your second question is "yes"—that would indeed be soon! Fortunately, the answer to your first question is "no."

For those who may have missed [Mark's announcement](#), "Jelly" is the set coming out next Spring—but it's a large set. *Lorwyn* Block and "Jelly" Block are two sets each rather than the customary three... and Standard rotates based on blocks, doesn't it?

Fortunately, wise heads prevailed over a rule that wasn't meant to handle this situation. Just as *Coldsnap* rotates with *Time Spiral* (not with *Ravnica*—take note!), *Lorwyn* and "Jelly" Blocks will rotate out of Standard together with the release of "Live" in 2009.

Visit our [Standard resource page](#) for more information about Standard rotation and our [Banned & Restricted Lists page](#) for similar info about other formats.

September 19, 2007



Q: Why is 'plainwalk' the least printed landwalk? Is there something that different about it from the other landwalks?

—Avi, Chicago, IL, USA

A: From **Matt Place**, **Magic R&D**:

Hello Avi,

Plainswalking is hard. The other four land walks are fairly easy. How does a dryad or **Bog Wraith** avoid being seen when moving through a forest or swamp? They just hide behind a tree. The same is true for a goblin; if he is going to be spotted he just jumps behind a mountain. Islandwalk just means you are good at holding your breath. But how do you plainswalk? There is nowhere to hide! The **Righteous Avengers** clearly figured it out, but they don't give away their secret in the art. They all appear to be running out in the open and yelling loudly. Other creatures would do well to pay more attention to the **Righteous Avengers**—if they did we might see more plainswalkers in **Magic**.

September 18, 2007



Q: How do you choose the mini text line or two that appears below the article title in the normal article slots? Is it penned by the author of that particular article, penned by Kelly Digges, or is it taken from the article itself?
—Will, Zionsville, IN, USA

A: From **Kelly Digges**, editor of **magicthegathering.com**:

On today's Ask Wizards, a question about article taglines winds up... oh, about where you'd expect.

Will,

Those little blurbs such as "From Alpha to *Lorwyn*, the cards and events that shaped a developer" appear under every article title on our front page and in our archives. (Articles in the "big box" also get a paragraph of front-page lead-in, which is always an excerpt from the article.)

The taglines are almost never taken from the articles, as it's very rare that an article will contain a one-sentence summation of what it's all about. Who writes the taglines varies from article to article and author to author. A few authors always supply their own; far more will send one along if any spring to mind.

All this means that the vast majority of the time I'm the person responsible for those taglines, hopefully finding a sentence or two that support and expand on the title, explain what the article is about, and tantalize you, the reader, to click the link and see what it's all about.

September 17 – Magic Rules Corner



Q: What happens to a face-down creature as **Momentary Blink** targets it? Does it return to play face down, or as the face-up version? Also, if the latter, would it trigger any "turned face up" abilities? Thanks!
—Scott, Vallejo, CA, USA

A: From the **magicthegathering.com** Rules Corner:

First, let's take a look at the entry from the *Time Spiral* FAQ:

- When **Momentary Blink** resolves, the creature is removed from the game, then immediately returned to play. The game sees the returning card as a different permanent from the one that left play. Any counters, Auras, and so on are removed. Any spells or abilities targeting the creature no longer target it.

The key point here is that the game sees the returning card as a different permanent. The fact that it is the same physical card doesn't matter. This means that it comes into play as it normally would if it were put into play any other way. It also means that it has no "memory" of its former state.

When a face-down creature is removed from the game, it's removed from the game face up. When it's put into play (as opposed to being played face down using its morph ability), it comes into play face up—and, more importantly, it has never been face down, so any "turns face up" triggers—either its own or those on cards like **Unblinking Bleb**—don't apply.

So **Momentary Blink** is a trick that works very well on your **Akroma, Angel of Fury**... and not so well on your **Willbender**.

*The **Magic Rules Corner** is a new weekly feature dedicated to answering your rules questions. For more help with **Magic** rules, check out the newly redesigned [rules page](#) and the [Rules Q&A Forum](#).*

September 14, 2007



Q: The text on **Puppeteer** says "👁️, 👁️: You may tap or untap target creature." Why does it state that you may? Why doesn't it simply say "Tap or untap target creature"? Why would you ever play the ability, and then opt to have it do nothing? Even if you wanted to use **Puppeteer** as a mana sink (which I found doubtful in a core set), you could just use him to untap himself. I just don't get why they have the two extra and seemingly needless words "you may" on a card whose ability is clearly going to be used if the cost is paid.
—Alex, Minneapolis, MN, USA

A: From **Mark Gottlieb**, **Magic** rules manager:

When **Puppeteer** was originally printed, it didn't say "you may"; it just said "👁️, 👁️: Tap or untap target creature." Same with **Twiddle**, **Twitch**, and so on. All those cards now say "you may" in their Oracle wordings, and **Puppeteer** and **Twitch** were printed with the new wording in the *Tenth Edition* set. So the question is "Why?" Why add words to the cards when they worked just fine as is?

Well, in my opinion, they didn't work as is! We just pretended it did. To understand the issue, you need to be familiar with this rule.

413.2c If an effect offers any choices other than choices already made as part of playing the spell or ability, the player announces these while applying the effect. The player can't choose an option that's

illegal or impossible. (For example, a player can't avoid the consequences of not taking an optional action if he or she can't meet all the immediate requirements of that action.) Drawing a card is never considered an impossible action, even if there are no cards in the affected player's library.

Consider **Puppeteer** when its ability said "Tap or untap target artifact, creature, or land." Say you play **Puppeteer's** ability targeting a tapped **Hill Giant**, which you would do because you want to untap it. In response, I play an ability that untaps that **Hill Giant**. Now the ability resolves. 413.2 prohibits you from untapping the **Hill Giant**! Untapping an untapped permanent is impossible (it's an action you can't perform), so you can't choose that option. You must choose the other option, so you're forced to tap the **Hill Giant**.

This is obviously ridiculous, and the game has never worked that way. Rule 413.2 was simply ignored in these cases, though there was no specific justification for doing so. The options for resolving this conflict were to either: 1) Start enforcing the rule, which would change the functionality of all **Twiddle**-type effects in an awful way; 2) Put this exception into the rule, which would make it more arbitrary and confusing; or 3) Errata the cards in a generally invisible way so they would work the way they always worked and would correctly interact with the rules.

We chose to give about 20 cards "you may" errata so their wordings reflect the way they actually work. Now in the **Hill Giant** example above, when **Puppeteer's** ability resolves, you choose whether to tap the **Hill Giant**, or whether to do nothing and leave it tapped. The end result is what you'd always expect: When a **Twiddle**-type effect resolves, you can change the tapped / untapped status of the targeted permanent, or you can leave it the way it is. The only difference is that now these cards say what they actually do.



September 13, 2007



Q: First off, good job on *Tenth Edition*! There is one thing that I am curious about though: Why were **Beacon of Creation** and **Beacon of Tomorrows** left out of *Tenth Edition*?
—Alex, Fort Collins, CO, USA

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Director of **Magic** R&D:

We talked about including all five Beacons, but **Beacon of Creation** was causing us a few problems. One, we wanted to print **Blanchwood Armor** (which cares about **Forests**) and **Verdant Force** (which makes 1/1 green tokens) more than the Beacon, and it competes with those cards for unique mental space. Two, **Beacon of Creation** was a bit too strong in Standard playtesting, and because we were already giving green **Birds of Paradise**, **Treetop Village**, and **Troll Ascetic** we didn't want to give it the Beacon as well. So we cut Creation and looked for another one to cut so that we wouldn't have four of a cycle in a set (which is awkward). **Beacon of Tomorrows** had the best choice of replacements, **Time Stretch**.

September 12, 2007



Q: Some spells have very similar effects (such as **Distress** and **Coercion** or **Careful Consideration** and **Sift**), but they differ in whether you can target any player or only affect opponents / yourself. How do you decide which to do when making a card?
—Roi, Champaign, IL, USA

A: From **Devin Low**, **Magic** head developer:

Hey Roi,

Good question. There are reasons to write both "Draw four cards" and "Target player draws four cards," which explains why we flip back and forth sometimes. I can think of seven reasons to go one way or the other.

Reasons to write "Draw four cards":

- It's simpler to read, especially for core set or promotable-to-the-core-set vanilla cards. It's easier for new players who don't yet speak "Magic-ese" to read "Draw four cards" than to read "Target player draws four cards."
- Flavor. Cracking open the magical egg on **Hatching Plans** should give YOU knowledge, not your opponent.
- It reads better on long-text cards. It would make the already-lengthy **Garza Zol**, **Plague Queen** lengthier and clunkier to read if it could make anyone draw a card.

Reasons to write "Target player draws four cards":

- It's multiplayer-friendly.
- It's a fun moment when you find a reason to make your opponent draw four instead of yourself.

Reasons to go either way:

- How do we want this card to interact with target-changing effects or shroud?
- Do we want people to deck opponents with this card? I believe it was a mistake to let **Stroke of Genius** target opponents, because it let **Urza's Saga** combo decks have a built-in kill mechanism that is also a

card-drawing card that finds the rest of their combo, instead of needing to include a **Fireball** or something. However, I think it's cool that **Cephalid Broker** can target the opponent to deck them in a closely fought *Odyssey Limited* fight.

September 11, 2007

Q: How close can a card be to a functional reprint of a card on the Reserved List before it can see print?
—Graeme, Eau Claire, WI, USA

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Director of **Magic R&D**:

From the [Official Reprint Policy](#): "A card is considered functionally identical to another card if it has the same card type, subtypes, abilities, mana cost, power, and toughness." That statement gives us a ton of leeway with creatures. We could, under the letter of the law, the following variations on the Reserved card **Thunder Spirit** (as long as they had new names):

- **Thunder Spirit** with the creature type Griffin
- **Thunder Spirit** as a 2♦ 2/2
- **Thunder Spirit** as a 1♦♦ 3/3
- **Thunder Spirit** with double strike instead of first strike

Spells are a little tougher because there are fewer knobs to turn. But we could print these variations on **Balance**, also on the Reserved List (again, with new names):

- **Balance** as a 1♦ instant
- **Balance** as a ♦ sorcery
- **Balance** as a 1♦♦ sorcery that also "balanced" artifacts and/or enchantments
- **Balance** as a 1♦♦ Arcane sorcery.

We wouldn't actually do any of those for several reasons. One, many of the cards on the Reserved List are actually too powerful to reprint (like **Balance**), so we certainly aren't going to make better versions of them. Two, we don't like obsoleting existing cards in general regardless of whether they are on the Reserved List or not. Three, we feel the Reserved List is important enough that it is worth following the spirit of the law as opposed to just the letter.

Planar Chaos let us get away with about as much as we were willing to; it contained several "timeshifted" versions of Reserved cards, like **Porphyry Nodes** (**Drop of Honey**) and **Null Profusion** (**Recycle**).



September 10, 2007

Q: I have a **Knight of the Hokey Pokey** in play, which I **Donate** to my opponent. Later in the game I take control of my opponent's turn using **Mindslaver**. When "my opponent" decides to activate the **Knight of the Hokey Pokey** I was so kind to give him, I assume he has to do the hokey pokey, but what happens if he refuses to do it?

—Tocawe, Norway

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** Head Designer:

Tocawe,

The same thing that happens when you **Mindslaver** them and ask them to do anything. For example, if there is an effect that forces them to discard a card, they have to discard a card. If they refuse to do something they are told to do, then they concede the game. So basically it's Hokey Pokey or die.

I should add that all of the above are rules from black-bordered **Magic** (as opposed to silver-bordered rules). I didn't see any need to change them.

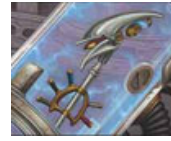
September 7, 2007

Q: Who, exactly, is "magicthegathering.com Staff"? From certain feature articles to some coverage articles and most Arcana articles, this pseudonym is oft used. Who can we, the readers, give credit to for these fine bits of work?

—Chuck, Illinois

A: A: From **magicthegathering.com** staff.

Good question, Chuck—if that is your real name. We use this pseudonym any time that the author is less relevant to you, the audience, than the content of the piece. When does this happen? Let's see...



Maybe the item on the front page is just a link somewhere else (event coverage, minisites, sortable spoilers, podcasts), and crediting everyone who worked on what we're linking is redundant or impossible. Take a look, for instance, at the front page of the [Planeswalkers Minisite](#), which our feature article slot has linked to recently. It features art by Aleksí Briclot, web development by Monty Ashley, design by our art staff, and links to a puzzle by Mark Gottlieb and properly credited articles written by Brady Dommermuth, Mark Rosewater, and Doug Beyer (oops, wait, that's next week...). We don't have room to list everyone who worked on the minisite, so who should we credit for putting the link on the front page? The answer is, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING READING AN AUTHOR ATTRIBUTION?! GO LOOK AT PLANESWALKERS!"

The item in question might be a regular feature that isn't always penned by the same person. The vast majority of Magic Arcana have been written by Doug Beyer, but not quite all of them, and every Friday is a wallpaper made by one of our in-house art staff, and some Arcana are just links to things anyway, and Doug's role on Arcana might change now that he's [taking over Taste the Magic](#). Do you need to know all that? Nope! You just need to know that when you click on a Magic Arcana, you get something official, professional, and factual penned by someone here at [magicthegathering.com](#).

In some cases—like this one, even if it is a bit tongue-in-cheek—the person saying something isn't nearly as important as what's being said. An announcement about a column is probably penned by Scott Johns or Kelly Digges, but that isn't always the case—and it doesn't really matter. What matters is the announcement. Similarly, [magicthegathering.com](#) Staff's close personal friend Event Coverage Staff posts decklists, pairings, and other general info, as well as the wrap-up about the winner at the end. It doesn't matter whether Greg Collins wrote the wrap-up or which one of the coverage team typed up the decklists—and the Top 8 players themselves wrote the majority of the text in the Top 8 Player Profiles.

Rather than track—and expect you to track—which person or people wrote each of these blurbs, posted each of these links, or made each of these announcements, we use a single author attribution that can deliver all sorts of news, from big to small, with a relatively neutral "voice."

September 6, 2007



Q: I was reading through the new Penalty Guidelines and this rule struck me:

"Whenever a player adds an object to the stack, they are assumed to be passing priority unless they explicitly announce that they intend to retain it. If they add a group of objects to the stack without explicitly retaining priority and a player wishes to take an action at a point in the middle, the actions should be reversed up to that point."

Doesn't this completely contradict how the game works in the comprehensive rules? The comp rules allow a player that has priority can put as much on the stack as they want (assuming that they're playing legal spells and abilities) without passing priority. Doesn't a rule like this just end up requiring more time to complete matches because a player would have to play a spell or effect, announce that they're keeping priority, play a spell or effect, announce that they're keeping priority...?

Could somebody please explain this to me?

—helpingfriendlybook, [magicthegathering.com](#) forums

A: From **Toby Elliot**, DCI-Certified Level Five Judge:

Many shortcuts in the game contradict how the rules work. After all, drawing a card and saying "go" violates several rules about appropriate priority passing. This shortcut is another one that simply reflects how players play the game—99% of the time, when they play a spell or ability, they don't want to respond to it themselves and, if they do, they almost always say (when playing the first one) that they wish to retain priority.

Thus, we have a shortcut that addresses the default case while still letting people play the game "correctly" in the situations they wish to. I think you'll find that not having to explicitly pass priority every time you play a spell or ability will speed up the game quite a bit more than having to announce the few times where you want to keep it, and it makes it easier for judges to handle cases when there is genuine disagreement between the players.

Section 51 of the [latest DCI Penalty Guide](#) is devoted to shortcuts. Before it gets into the specifics of passing priority, it offers these general notes on the use of shortcuts:

A shortcut is an action taken by players to skip parts of the technical play sequence without explicitly announcing them. Shortcuts are essential for the smooth play of a game, as they allow players to play in a clear fashion without getting bogged down in the minutia of the rules. Most shortcuts involve skipping one or more priority passes to the mutual understanding of all players; if a player wishes to demonstrate or use a new shortcut entailing any number of priority passes, they must be clear where the game state will end up as part of the request.

A player may interrupt a shortcut by explaining how they are deviating from it or at which point in the middle they wish to take an action. If the players are confused by the use of a shortcut, they should be backed up to the beginning of the shortcut and no penalty should be issued (though they should be reminded to play more clearly). A player is not allowed to use a previously undeclared shortcut, or to modify an in-use shortcut without announcing the modification, in order to create ambiguity in the game.



Q: In **Magic** history, what are the top ten cards that have the scariest illustrations?

–Simon, Philippines

A: From **Jeremy Jarvis**, **Magic** art director:

Hi Simon,

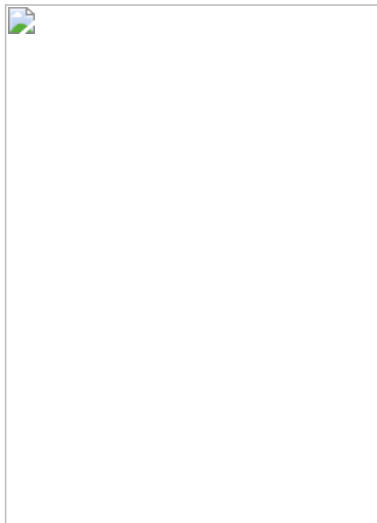
Scary, disgusting, disturbing, creepy, unnerving... There are some fine lines between these categories, and a lot of overlap. Let me answer your question this way: What are the top images in **Magic** that evoke a 'horrible response' from the viewer, because they're gross or scary or what have you?

Here are my guidelines:

- *Aesthetics*: Not just a drawing of a flayed man (something that's objectively supposed to be 'gross'), but a painting in which the artist's approach, style and handling of the medium really come together to evoke mood, activate the subject matter, and really push the idea and image home.
- *Synaesthetics*: Grabs you with an implication of more than just the visual. Can you FEEL it? Do you recoil when you imagine SMELLING that horrible thing? Can you imagine the SOUND it makes as it stalks and then devours? Does its posture imply its movement? Does it slither, or lurch all hurky-jurky like a Marilyn Manson video? Do you wince at the thought of running your fingers over its surface and FEELING the horrible, slick viscera?
- *Punch*: If this thing were the big reveal of a horror movie, would it shock / startle / gross me out? This is really tough when you get a single still image, but imagine the story around it. You wait for a hour and 45 minutes, and then X is revealed, slowly tracking in frame, turning to meet your gaze, and then lunging at the camera (or what have you).

I didn't narrow it to 10, but here are my top contenders in alphabetical order:

Abomination by Mark Tedin
 Cyclopean Giant by Mark Tedin
 Dauthi Marauder by Andrew Robinson
 Dread Slag by Anthony S. Waters
 Dune-Brood Nephilim by Jim Murray
 Gaze of Pain by Anson Maddocks
 Grinning Demon by Mark Zug
 Horror of Horrors by Mark Tedin
 Ichorid by rk post
 Liege of the Pit by Jeremy Jarvis
 Living Wall by Anson Maddocks
 Macabre Waltz by Jim Murray
 Mind Extraction by Adam Rex
 Mindstab Thrull by Mark Tedin
 Mutilate by Eric Peterson
 Necromantic Thirst by Brandon Kitkouski
 Shimian Specter by Anthony S. Waters
 Skittering Horror by Mark Zug
 Terror by Adam Rex
 Treacherous Urge by Steven Belledin
 Zombie Cannibal by Adam Rex



Gleancrawler (prerelease version) by Jeremy Jarvis

This is all highly subjective, of course. In fact, here is a thread that's been going for a while on our boards titled "[Most Disturbing Card Art?](#)". Stop in, see what other players think, and contribute your own grisly contenders!

JJ



Q: Who is Chiss-Goria and how does this relate to his/her/its Tooth and Scale cards having affinity for artifacts?

–Geoff, Regina, SK, Canada

A: From **Doug Beyer**, **Magic** creative team:

The answer is actually pretty cool. Chiss-Goria was an ancient one of these:



Furnace Dragon art by Matthew D. Wilson

The body of a Mirrodin furnace dragon is merged with metal components, augmenting its offensive power and mobility (and explaining **Furnace Dragon's** affinity for artifacts mechanic). A furnace dragon has a literal furnace inside its chest, which generates both its breath weapon and bursts of fire from "exhaust vents" in its wings. Note that a furnace dragon's wings have no fleshy membranes—there would be no need. **Furnace Dragon** doesn't glide on wind currents; it jets through Mirrodin's skies on pure explosive power.

These dragons' metallic modifications leave them inherently unstable. Overloading their furnaces for particularly large gouts of flame-production can have explosive repercussions.

Chiss-Goria was a particularly nasty furnace dragon of Mirrodin's early days. Its **Tooth** and **Scale** are artifacts that are literally pieces shed from its body, and they have affinity for artifacts just like the dragon did. It's not known whether Chiss-Goria still lives to this day—I wouldn't be surprised if he died long ago from a core-furnace explosion!



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Submit a question](#) to Ask Wizards



[Ask Wizards](#) archive

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

© 1995-2008 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

