

The Warrior Esthetic

Doug Beyer
Taste the Magic
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Eye-roll. Come on. The Warrior creature type is the dull one.

What? Are you kidding me?

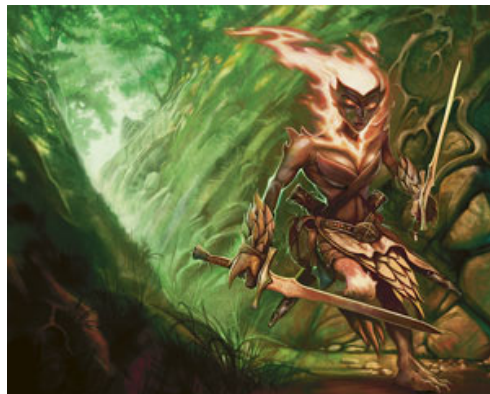
Warrior's the type that gets slapped on when the creature merits a class (i.e., when it's a sentient humanoid that's doing an obvious job), but doesn't have any clear role other than fighting, right?

No. You do not "slap on" the Warrior type.

Of course you do. You have a goblin, it's got a spear or something, it has power and toughness—it's a Warrior.

The Warrior type is much more than that, Mr. Hypothetical Italics Naysayer Person. It's the type that embodies the central conflict of **Magic** laid bare in its most raw and elemental form—war.

Wouldn't it be the Wizard type that embodies the central confl—



Buzz off—it's Warrior Week, okay? Wizards already had [their week in the sun](#). And yes, it's a game about powerful dueling wizards, but Warriors leave the spellcasting to others and get down to basics. They're about sweat and blood and leaving the edge of your axe just a little less sharp so it'll bring maximum hurt. They're about Bennettian facesmashery. They're about getting in your enemy's face and expressing your disagreement with his values *personally* and with extreme *immediacy*, in a way that makes him understand your point of view through *hitting*.

Aw yeah.

Look, you're a planeswalker, right? And you're squaring up against another such spell-hurling, creature-summoning traveler of the multiverse. What do you pull out of your holster to bring the pain? Some random monster might be good for raw damage capacity. Certainly summoning a baloth to do your bidding is a strong move in any test of wills. Summoning a wizard might, yes, get some tricky things done. But summon a warrior and I guarantee you're getting your point across, and fast. Warriors **hit hard**, **hit fast**, and **bring friends**.

The other main fighting class in **Magic** (and in *Morningtide*) is Soldier, an altogether more organized and ordered fighting force than the Warrior class—which Warriors see as working in their favor. The fierce spirit of the Warrior could never be contained in a uniform. Orders, as they see it, are for sheep—the best leadership comes from a Warrior's own heart. A lot of this flavor, like just about everything else in **Magic**, comes down to the color pie.

The Warrior's True Colors

Because the five colors of **Magic** clash in terms of their values and principles (and even in whether values and principles are good things to *have*), Warriors appear in greater density in some colors than in others. Which color

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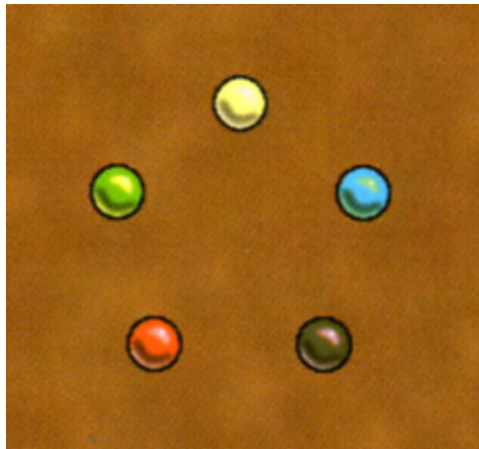
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has the most? Which the least? Look, I'm not going to just *te//* you. You're going to guess, and I'm going to judge your knowledge of the color pie and your attunement with the way of the Warrior. Using my highly developed interbrowser psionics abilities. Yeah.

Okay, arrange the colors in order of the number of mono-color Warrior creatures that appear in them, least Warriors first. (If you're somewhere that you can get to your **Magic** cards, you can select a card of each color and arrange them that way.)



Ready?

Okay, as of *Morningtide*, which color has the least creatures with the creature type Warrior?

Blue – 6 Warriors



Out of the over 200 non-changeling, non-Mistform Warriors in **Magic**, there are only 6 mono-blue ones. Blue's humanoids tend not to fight, and if they do, they're much more likely to be Soldiers, like Otaria's aven or the merrows and faeries of Lorwyn. Most of blue's Warriors are retro-fits based on having "Warrior" in their name. You just don't go to blue for that Warrior spirit (although I think with enough changelings you could pull off a mono-blue Warrior deck these days).

What color has the second-least Warriors?

White – 14 Warriors



This actually surprised me. I expected white to have the *least* Warriors, since the creative team's current philosophy on the Soldier / Warrior division is that white almost never gets Warriors. Community-oriented white is the most organized, the most militaristic of the colors, and I actually thought blue would end up having a few more

random Warriors than white. The difference comes down to a combination of *Lorwyn* Block giants and a few triple-typed retro-fits.

Giants in *Lorwyn* Block straddle the colors red and white, which meant they could have fallen into either the Soldier camp or the Warrior camp. The *Lorwyn* style guide describes giants as territorial loners, so an army they're not. They have no organized military, no martial hierarchy—they're just very large individuals with very large weapons. White giants tend to be flavored as more friendly and helpful to the other races, and the red ones are the irascible curmudgeons, but all of them fit best as Warriors.

White also gains a few Warriors from cards like *Wingbeat Warrior*. It was printed as a Bird Soldier back in *Legions*, not as a Warrior. But if a card with Warrior in its title doesn't work well in your Warrior deck, something is wrong—so *Wingbeat Warrior* got the Warrior type added on in the Grand Creature Type Update. Warrior wasn't a type with much mechanical import back in the *Legions* days, so it wasn't seen as a problem to name a Soldier creature a "Warrior," but these days we're pretty careful about it.

Moving on. What color has [the third-least \(and third-most\) Warriors?](#)

Black – 25 Warriors



Black is unique among the colors, in that it officially gets both Warrior creatures and Soldier creatures, depending on the flavor of the setting and of the individual card. *Portal Three Kingdoms* is full of black Soldiers, whereas Kamigawa Block was full of black Ogre Warriors and Rat Warriors. Black also gets both Shamans and Wizards, depending on the setting and card concept. Kamigawa's ogres and nezumi, plus a smattering of humans and *Lorwyn* boggarts, pull the color comfortably into the middle of the road on the Warrior count.

Okay, now it's down to two. Which order? Which color has the most Warriors, and which has [the second-most?](#)

Green – 56 Warriors

Red – 94 Warriors



It's not really close. Although green and red both have official (and substantial) claim on the Warrior type, red has far and away the most Warriors.

Green has a respectable number of Warriors among its creatures, with Elves providing most of them, and Kamigawa's Snakes, a smattering of *Lorwyn* Treefolk, and the occasional Human, Cat, or Ravnica Elemental making up the bulk of the rest. Wilderness-loving green spurns the military organization of Soldierdom, and prefers to let its fighters fight in whatever means necessary to protect nature.

But red is the true king of Warriors. Goblins make up the bulk here—there are almost 40 mono-red Goblin Warriors, making a red Goblin Warrior tribal crossover deck a smart possibility. Orcs, Ogres, Viashino, Giants, Dwarves, and Elementals make up most of the rest. Blunt, impulsive, and passionate, red's philosophy fits perfectly with that of the Warrior.

There are also 22 multicolor Warriors, and one artifact creature in *Hollow Warrior*. The *Legends* set had a lot of gold creatures printed with the now-defunct creature type Legend, and in the Grand Creature Type Update a lot of them became Human Warriors.

And *Morningtide* brings us the only noncreature Warrior in **Obsidian Battle-Axe**. You may not have known this, but Lorwyn has a bit of volcanic activity at its far outskirts—check out [the *Morningtide* novel](#) by Cory Herndon and Scott McGough for more detail on that. When the mountains' pyroclastic flow sizzles its way into parts of the Merrow Lanes river system, you can be sure that the merrows' silver tongues complain eloquently about the damage to their habitat. But giants enjoy mining the obsidian that results, and turn it into weaponry infused with their natural Warrior spirit.

Letter of the Week

One of the best parts of my job is reading the email and forum posts generated from this column. The emails can be particularly eloquent, and I wish more of them could be shared with you guys. To that end, I'm introducing a new feature of Taste the Magic—the Letter of the Week. Click the email icon at the bottom of the article to write in, and you might get your letter printed in TTM.

In [last Wednesday's column](#), I requested the help of orbitoplanar topologists to help me figure out an odd planar model of Lorwyn. While the orbitoplanar topology profession currently suffers from a tragic lack of existence (sort of like interbrowser psionics), I got quite a few creative emails from impressively qualified and smart people. Friend of the column Aaron Q., a college senior in physics, creative writing, and interactive digital media (!), truly gets into the spirit when he writes,

[...]Upon a short study of how one could path a sun traveling in a path that only dips below a horizon on a plane of non-standard shape, I discovered that a Möbius strip would not do. The sun could not path in such a way as to allow all sides of the strip to receive light at the same time, and the required twist would cause an awkward gravitational field anomaly, which could easily be resolved by placing Glen Elendra there. [Ha! – DB] The gravitational flux itself would lend a hand to the transportation magic of the faeries traveling to and from their rings. Regardless, such a planar design would be incongruent with the current flavor, though such a thought should not be shed completely. I do think a topology similar to an Umbilic Torus or figure-8 Klein Bottle could work.

Regardless, the topography of Lorwyn could be none of these things due to the flavorful restrains of never-ending daylight across the entire plane, barring, of course, multiple suns. Seeing as Lorwyn, presumably, only has one sun, the option of a one sided flat plane becomes obvious. The shape can be whatever you like, square, rectangle, circle, storybook, whatever.

This is where I would reference an attached diagram that I created, painstakingly, in Publisher (the lack of Illustrator on this machine is a great loss), but I couldn't find a way to attach said diagram. So we will have to live with the most vivid descriptions I can come up with.

Let's choose a surface, a circle let's say, and on this circle is Lorwyn, all the trees, and Treefolk, the mountains, and the Giants, the rivers and waterways, and the Merrow, all living on this idyllic circular plane. The plane needs depth, so let's stretch the circle into a cylindrical shape. We need the depth to give the plane gravity, or else, when we add the sun, all the cute little Kithkin will get sucked off into a fiery death, and that isn't very Lorwyn, a bit more *Event Horizon* really. Now, if we wanted to, we could design the bottom surface to create equal gravitational pull on all parts of the plane, but a cylinder will do for our purposes. Now we add a stationary star, some distance away from, and a little above our plane. Just for fun, let's start the plane spinning, along its central axis, coming straight up out of the plane, perpendicular to the ground. Now the sun will appear to travel in a circle as viewed from Lorwyn. We can picture this circle by drawing a line from the center of the sun, to the center point in the plane, the "light line," and raising a **Wall of Glare** up from the edge of the plane, and mark where the Light Line and the **Wall of Glare** intersect. Now, if we were to put a pendulum, like that of a grandfather clock, onto the bottom of the plane, and set it into motion. The plane now tilts. If it tilted so far as to have the Light Line almost hit the edge of the horizon... We would have a path that would look like a basic wave around the plane, coming close to the horizon, and then pulling up into the sky before coming back down again. We now have the Orbitoplanar Topography of Lorwyn. I hope that I explained it well enough! If you have any questions, drop me a line. [...]

Thanks Aaron! An enormous Vorthosian pendulum, swinging a cylindrical plane back and forth to cause the sun to appear to arc back and forth across the sky. Genius—of the slightly mad sort. I daresay Aaron has a little Izzet blood in him.

Don't miss your chance to attend a *Morningtide* [Launch Party](#) near you this weekend. Special "Midnight Madness" locations in North America will begin selling *Morningtide* at 12:01 a.m. on the set's release date: this Friday, February 1, and events will continue throughout the weekend at participating stores. Besides getting your first chance to buy packs of *Morningtide*, you'll also be able to play in Sealed Deck events and win cool prizes. And don't forget, *Morningtide* is legal in Constructed on its release date!



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