



Following a Dream

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Taste the Magic
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WHAT IS MAGIC?
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Planeswalker **Jace Beleren** would take special interest in the plane of Lorwyn. Not because the sun never goes down completely. Not because the blue mana sources are picturesque streams and babbling waterfalls. As a prodigy of the magic of the mind, he'd be interested in the trafficking of dreams that goes on there. Faeries transport precious dreams to their Queen. Giants collect fossils from mountainsides that they believe to be frozen dreams. Elementals are *made* of dreamstuff. If Jace could "tune in" on one dream in particular, he might be fascinated at how frequently it gets exchanged from being to being, mind to mind, throughout the day on Lorwyn. He might even record the thoughts of the beings it touched, and file that record away for future research.

Lorwyn Mind Study, Day 4

Subject: Calydd

Bio: Male kithkin farmer

"What's this? Wind in my face, Goldmeadow fields rushing past, saddle under my seat? I'm on a springjack. A fierce one, that bounds like the wind. This isn't one of my plow nags. This is a *knight's* steed. And I'm holding—not trowels. Swords. The swords of a knight. *My* swords! I can sense the thoughtweft—I can feel the sword-arms of Kinsbaile's mightiest, their courage coursing through me! Of course I'm a knight, I'm Calydd the Brave, scourge of the wicked! Ride ahead, faithful steed—and lead the way, thoughtweft brethren! Together we shall vanquish evil this day!"



Typical wish-fulfillment dream. The subject's mind is so dry with the routine of the fields, it's no wonder he's thrilled. If it weren't for the thoughtweft phenomenon I wouldn't even bother studying this little guy. It's peculiar he feels—or thinks he feels—the thoughtweft now, even while asleep.

Hold on, dream's changing. There's a new element.

"You there, monster! Halt your flickering advance! Identify yourself, and then be off with you! ...Don't have a name, do you? You're a mass of flame, heads a-writhing, some... chaotic horror! Stand down, elemental fiend! You'll die on my blades before your foul omens can corrupt fair Goldmeadow!"

Can't get a good fix on what he's seeing, but it's clearly deeply symbolic to him. Father figure, maybe. Bully in the schoolyard. Neighbor's mean dog. Whatever it is, it's got his heart pounding.

"On your guard! Take this! And this—*aaaaugh!* No! No! Cenns of Lorwyn, save me! My—*ughhh!*"

Huh. That's a new one. Surprisingly graphic. Burned alive in his own dream? If a kithkin dies in his dream, does he...?

Wait, the dream's ending. But he's not waking up—there's new magic here. Someone else is here, in his subconscious. The dream is... moving. Gotta investigate this.

Lorwyn Mind Study, Day 4

Subject: Etain

Bio: Female faerie gadabout

"If this kithkin doesn't stop squirming, I'll pierce his stupid fat eardrum with my rapier. This better be worth it—I'm not slaving over a farmer's brain for wheat dreams and thoughtweft oozings. Oh, springjacks, lovely, yes. No, I'll spare the Queen this rustic rubbish. Sleep tight, squirmy head; I'll go next door and see what your wife has in *her* snoozy skull. ...Oh, but soft! Your little reverie is improving as I speak. What's this now? Oh, yes. The Queen will definitely want some of this. Congratulations, little kith! You'll be part of Oona's treasury after all."

Treasury?

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"Hard to harvest this thing with all the twitching, but I think I can... Just need to... Got it! Whoop. This is a heavy one. And it's lurching like a wild thing—hardly even stays in the basket! What got *into* this bumpkin's pumpkin?"

Feels weird, following a dream out of somebody's head. I've lost contact with it—the faerie doesn't seem to be dreaming it herself, just transporting it. I can follow her thoughts about it, but she isn't experiencing it directly. She gets impressions from it, though. It's radiating to her. She can measure its intensity—by her reaction, this is a strong one. And she's getting some emotional resonance off of it; her pulse has quickened, just like his did. She doesn't see clear imagery or content, just vague inklings. I wonder what it feels like to have your dream stolen. I'd go back and check with the kithkin, but there's no time—faerie's on the move.



"This thing bucks like a mad cervin. I can't wait to dump it off. **Glory** to the Queen, this dream is heav—Oh!"

Lorwyn Mind Study, Day 4

Subject: Barrag Foetreader

Bio: Male giant warrior

"Ugh, something flew up nose."

Gads... What now?

"Leaned down to sniff circle of flowers. Got faerie in nose, I think. Itchy."

Ow. Giant's mind is intense. Single, immense thoughts, chained back to back and charging through his head, like a craw worm crashing through the woods. No complex thinking—just staccato blasts of simple observations. I'm getting a headache listening in on this guy. The sensation of his nasal itch feels... bigger than my entire being.

"Can't blow it out. Ugh, stuck. Have to sniff it further up instead."



I'm going to have to tune out of this guy some—can't take this direct telepathy.

"That's better. Hmm. Sleepy. Where's a hill to rest? I'll just nap here in the meadow. Clover makes a good bed."

What the... that was quick. When a giant sets his mind to sleep, he commits. My head is still ringing from the clubbing his thoughts gave me. But no time for rest yet, I can feel his dream blooming already.

"I'm a knight..."

Of course.

"Brave knight, on my cloudgoat. Slice up the world with my tiny little daggers."

The thoughts are already louder than I'd like again. Note to self—giants dream giant dreams. Interesting how he's incorporated elements from the kithkin's dream into his own. Some things different, some things the same. Why he still has the kithkin's swords, I have no idea. I wonder if the faerie is still alive up in his sinuses somewhere. I doubt she's getting this dream back from him, either way.

"Bad elemental! I'll slay you."

No way. I can't take the elemental cropping up in the giant's dream—it's already too surreal for me to get my mind around, and combined with the giant's intensity of thought—it's too much. I'm backing off. Hopefully I can get the gist from a looser connection with Mr. Foetreader.

That's better. I'm still listening to the giant, but at a higher level, not down in his deep mind right alongside him. It's a little like the faerie was doing, actually—I'm still getting whiffs of his emotional state, like fumes coming off his sleeping form—but I can't see detailed imagery anymore. Just flashes of stuff. He's riding a flying goat, he's battling an elemental of flame or... dynamism... and it's swarming all around him. He's down! Amazing. This dream must be something potent—even a giant is defeated by this dream-elemental, in his own mind.

I'm getting something else now. Someone's here, another presence in this dream. Another faerie? No.

Lorwyn Mind Study, Day 4

Subject: Ashling

Bio: Female flamekin pilgrim

"I sense it again. It's nearby. Hear me, great one..."

It's a flamekin, one of those humanoid fire elementals. Can they manipulate dreams directly? I didn't think so.

"I can feel your presence. I know you're calling out to me, contacting me from afar. I know you're important to my destiny. I just don't know how. Help me..."

No, she's not communicating with the dream. She's calling out to an entity, a greater elemental she thinks is nearby. She's probably just mistaken, she's getting vibes from the giant's powerful dream about a fire elemental and is interpreting them as a real being.

Except—

I think the dream is—answering her.

Lorwyn Mind Study, Day 4

Subject: Unknown elemental entity

Bio: ???



It's wordless, almost not even thought at all, but it's definitely a form of communication. It's incredibly powerful—it's tearing my brains out. I shouldn't listen in to this—it hurts. But I've never heard an elemental's mind before. The entity in the dream—it was no dream at all, it was a being living inside the kithkin's knight dream. Or it's an entity made of dream somehow, and yet able to exist outside of it. I'm not sure if I'm making sense. I can't keep this up. The flamekin is communing with the elemental now—they're sharing an incredible amount of emotion—it's beyond me. Can't handle it. Dropping the spell.

Announcement: The *Shadowmoor* Anthology

There's an incredible amount of flavor goodness to spill about *Shadowmoor*. The flavor of the set is both fun on the immediate impact level, and deeply pleasing to the detail-craving goober in me. I can't wait to share, once *Shadowmoor* previews begin... at the end of this month. Patience is like the lamest virtue, I swear.

However, I can share one cool tidbit today. The book releasing in conjunction with *Shadowmoor* is an anthology, a collection of a novella and short stories. The novella is by Cory Herndon and Scott McGough and continues the events of the *Lorwyn* and *Morningtide* novels. Then there are eight other short stories by these authors: Ken Troop, Denise Graham, Jess Lebow, Will McDermott, Matt Cavotta, John Delaney, Jenna Helland, and Doug Beyer.

Yep, check out the [Shadowmoor anthology](#) and you'll get a taste of two Taste the Magic writers, plus a host of other talented folks. I can tell you, when we sent out the *Shadowmoor* style guide to the writers (yep, we made two style guides this year, and *Shadowmoor* definitely has its own distinct look—more on that in the weeks to come), we got a lot of excited comments back. Like I said, there is serious flavor goodness coming. Look for the anthology close to the release of the *Shadowmoor* card set!

Letter of the Week

In what order are cards created/designed/etc. in comparison to the books? Rhys finally got his own card in the *Morningtide* set, but Brion had his own card in *Lorwyn*. Are the books written around the

cards, or are the cards flavored to the books?
—Matt

The short answer is: a little of both, and sometimes neither.

Let's back up a bit. Once the card design team of a new large set (like *Lorwyn*) has an idea of the direction they want to go in the block (like a new twist on tribal), the creative team steps in to provide ideas about how the setting might be flavored to match those mechanics. Once the general direction is agreed upon, the creative team undertakes the creation of the style guide, that holy document on which art, card names, flavor text, and even novels are more or less based. The style guide fleshes out all kinds of details about the setting—what races live there, what their personalities and cultures are like, what named locations have significance for them, and what individual *characters* are important in that world.

Several of the characters in the *Lorwyn* and *Morningtide* novels, for example, were devised during the world-building of the Lorwyn setting. The elves Eidren and Desmera, the treefolk Doran and Colfenor (who was called Cronan in the style guide), **Gaddock Teeg**, the faeries of the Vendilion clique, the flamekin Ashling, and the giant Rosheen Meanderer were all detailed in the Lorwyn style guide. It helps having named characters right there in the style guide, in case the novelists or the flavor text writers end up wanting to write consistent stories about them.

Scott McGough and Cory Herndon incorporated many of these characters into their novels—and of course made up many, many of their own. The novelists generally get to writing as early as possible, basically as soon as the creative team has a solid idea about what the world will be like, sometimes even before the style guide is done. Writing goes on concurrently with the development of the corresponding card set, and the writers check in from time to time with the creative team to make sure there aren't bad contradictions between the set and the books. (Even then, goofs can happen.)

The style guide also helps inform what the legendary creatures of a set should be. **Doran, the Siege Tower**, for example, didn't end up in the novels, but his cool write-up in the style guide gave rise to his presence as a legend in the set. So the style guide is often the prime mover behind both the novels and the legendary creatures in the set.

However, beyond that there's direct interplay between them like you describe, Matt. As drafts of the novels come in, it becomes clear who the important characters are in the books—and we on the creative team try, when possible, to find room in the card set to showcase those characters as legends. **Rhys** was one of the characters that was all-new in the novels, and while we knew about him and his importance before the *Lorwyn* set went out the door, there wasn't a great fit for him in the set. Most of the legends in *Lorwyn* were part of a gold mega-cycle, and we didn't think **Rhys** really fit as a full-on black-green character. Plus there were already a lot of legends in the set. So we waited until *Morningtide* to have a card built around him. Tons of issues affect whether there's room for a given legend—everybody's got goals for the card set, not just the creative team—and even we think there's an upper limit on how many legends should appear in a typical set!

Finally, sometimes it goes the other way—sometimes the novelists find room in the book to include a character that's based on a card. This is less common, since the writers have to get started writing so early relative to when the card designs are finished, but it happens. I have a short story in the *Shadowmoor* anthology, for example, that's inspired by a rare black creature in that set!



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