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Great Cardsmith Designer Search: Stage 3 – Mechanic Redux

@fiskerton [78 pts]

Bravery [12 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 2

Card Design – 3

The templating on the legendary clause should be “As long as enchanted creature is a human, it has exalted.” on a separate line. This is relatively minor though. I like that the bonus is exalted and the base effect is first strike. This isn't the type of card you usually want to play since +1/+1 and first strike is relatively minor. Generally, auras that only increase power by 1 aren't that impactful unless they have another effect so on a non-legendary creature I don't get a lot of value on this. First strike helps a good deal, but still on a non-legendary creature this just isn't worth a card. On a legendary creature, however, this can give +2/+2 and first strike (if the legend attacks) which is significant. That makes the reward worth the cost. I am not going to talk too much about the legendary them (I'll save that for the overall comments), but I would think that this going to be put on a nonlegendary creature most of the time for a number of reasons. 1) This kind of effect is usually much more impactful on a small, low value creature (a 2/2 à 4/4 first strike is much more of an improvement than a 5/5 à 7/7 first strike) 2) Most legendary creatures are expensive and you would have to hold this in your hand for several turns to get it on a legendary. 3) There just aren't enough legendary creatures to reliably enable the exalted.

Another consideration is that because auras are typically put under the creature they enchant, if this is put on a legendary creature it will not be visible that it gains exalted. This is not too big a deal, but is one of the reasons why you rarely see conditional static abilities on auras, especially at common. Overall, I think the design logic behind the card effects is good, but it still falls short because the reward, while real, just won't happen enough.

Boros Mastersmith [14 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 0

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 4

Card Design – 4

I did approve the use of "Exalted N" for this challenge, but here it doesn't work from a few perspectives. The reason I okayed it because it was a cleaner wording than "Exalted, exalted" with the same functionality. On this card though, it doesn't really work in one line as you have it templated so I would recommend changing it to the following: "Whenever a legendary creature you control attacks alone, it gets +1/+1 until end of turn.". Since you didn't use Exalted N in any of your other cards, I think this is cleaner templating that doesn't change how exalted is written. Also, if you want to use Exalted N, "Exalted" becomes "Exalted 1". On a card design note, I like this card. The base body is costed correctly, it is an appropriate uncommon reward for your Exalted/Legendary theme, and is functional and playable without every having a legend. All in all, good design.

Bogoro Wulfram [12 pts]

Rarity – 1

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 1

Card Design – 5

This card has so much rules complexity it should probably be rare. The only reason I rated it borderline is because with the right templating it might be okay at uncommon. Still, it is closer to rare than to uncommon. I think because the replacement effect converts power to toughness that this effect feels red enough to not undermine the color pie. This is unexplored space, so I could be wrong but I think it is okay. Unfortunately, the reason this is unexplored space is that the rules around this are incredibly confusing. Does this affect +1/+1 counters? What if I give a creature +2/+2? What about +3/+2? I don't know the answers to any of these questions and even if the wording you put or an equivalent wording works within the rules, even the top 1% of magic players will not be sure what is supposed to happen? This would lead to endless judge calls and disputes that just aren't worth the trouble of printing this card (hence the low playability score—this card just couldn't be printed). In a digital-only game, this would work just fine but not in a paper game. That being said, I really like the card design. This effect has the obvious synergy with exalted and

feels like a cool way of making a typically white-aligned ability feel red. I like that you paired it with trample on this card as they work nicely together. I think this card really wants exalted to have reminder text rather than flavor text so it is clear that exalted will give +2/+0 rather than +1/+1. Another strong point of this design is the rarity. Although this card should probably be rare, I think it is good that you made a legendary uncommon as that shows that you are thinking about how your theme will play out in limited. All in all, this is a great design that has a major rules issue and that is really the only thing holding it back.

Sunhome War Hall [13 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 2

Card Design – 4

To me this card feels more like a legendary matters card that uses exalted than an exalted card that uses legendary. That is not a bad thing in and of itself, but the execution causes some problems. First, I like how you included a colorless mana ability and one for only legendary creatures. It is good design to always make sure your lands can tap for some sort of mana. Making a creature legendary will generally have no other effect than to enable the static exalted ability of this card. It feels like this ability really reads “pay 4 mana, give a creature exalted until end of turn.” Again, that is not a problem on its own. The real problem comes in with the static ability. Giving multiple creatures exalted on a single land just is too powerful. Being legendary helps as you can’t just jam 4 of these into a deck with no drawback but it is still too powerful. My main issue with this from a power level standpoint is that this is already rewarding you with the mana ability for playing legendries, and putting an ability that stacks in multiples on a card that says “play legendaries” is just too much of a reward for a land. Lands with static abilities also cause a lot of missed triggers as they can easily get covered up by another land and forgotten about. I like the mana abilities and the overall idea though. I think this would have been better as giving a max of one instance of exalted in some way (tapping and paying mana, controlling a legendary creature, etc.) Again, you showed some good design skills in putting this together but missed on the execution a bit.

Monument to Fallen Heroes [10 pts]

Rarity – 0

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 2

Card Design – 3

This card would be better at rare than mythic rare, as it cares about a very specific quality and would not warp limited. It is just not powerful, special, or flashy enough to be rare. This card is a little bit confusing. First, I like how whenever a legendary creature (fallen hero)

dies, it gives your battlefield an additional instance of exalted. However, making it an enchantment with no other abilities is just asking for someone to forget that and start attacking with the legendary creature. This isn't too big an issue or a rare/mythic, but it is still a consideration. Then we get to the second ability, which explains why you want the enchantment, but overall is a little confused. You pay 5 mana to play a legend from your hand by sacrificing your exalted token with the same name, but this doesn't always play well. Sure, when you have a legend that costs 5+ mana you get to save on mana and it always gives your creature pseudo-flash and pseudo-uncounterable, but sometimes you will just play your legend, causing the enchantment version to be sacrificed. So in summary, you have one ability that is flavorful and encourages stacking exalted, and another ability that wants to trade exalted instances for more legendary creatures. I think this card would be better off if it were more focused. My suggestions would be:

"CARDNAME has Exalted X, where X is one plus the number of legendary creatures exiled with CARDNAME.

Whenever a legendary creature you control dies, exile it.

Creatures with the same name as creatures exiled with CARDNAME cost 2 less to cast and can't be countered."

This wording doesn't sacrifice the exalted bonus and also rewards playing more legendaries. This card also would have been a great opportunity to use Exalted N. Overall, I like the concept of this card but your execution needs a lot of refining to be truly great.

BONUS FEEDBACK: I had already graded Justicia before you swapped her, so here is her feedback. NOTE: this did not contribute to your point total since it was not included in your final submission.

Justicia, Boros Champion [14 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 0

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 2

Playability – 4

Card Design – 5

Everything about this card is white: Flying, vigilance, exalted, and the triggered ability. As is, I don't buy this as a W/R creature, especially one with RR in its mana cost. This creature is flavored as a protector who helps out when a creature attacks alone and that is pure mono-white, not red. To make her red, I would swap out vigilance for a red combat keyword. Also, the templating on the triggered ability doesn't work (you can't declare her as an attacker as that step has already passed and the triggers need to be copied if you want to word it that way, and even then if they aren't stacked correctly it won't work how think it will). I definitely get what you are going for (and I really like it), but here are two solutions that should function similarly: 1) "Whenever a creature you control attacks alone, you may exile Justicia, Boros Champion. If you do, return her to the battlefield tapped and attacking. She gets +1/+1 until end of turn for each instance of exalted among permanents you control." OR 2) Whenever another creature you control attacks alone, after this phase there is an

additional combat phase. Other creatures can't attack during extra combat phases". Both have the same function but I think the first conveys the flavor better (as the creatures are actually attacking together). All in all, I really like this design. This is a unique ability that really feels like it belongs on a legendary creature and that makes me excited about playing with this card. I think this card will play great (it is a limited bomb, so good choice with Mythic Rare), be fun, and plays nicely with Exalted while also putting a new twist on its execution. Excellent job!

Overall Submission [17 pts]

Guild Theme [4 pts]

I think you did well to make these cards feel like Boros cards. The flavor fit and I think that the play pattern did as well. I am not sure that I buy the legendary sub-theme as either a Boros thing or a viable archetype / theme in limited (more on this in a minute), but I have to say that for the most part your designs were good enough without the legendary bonus to make it okay.

Creativity [5 pts]

You showed a ton of creativity in your submission this week. I was particularly impressed with both your legendary creatures. Although they both had rules/templating issues, you really pushed the envelope and I think from a pure gameplay perspective that if all the rules worked out that both cards would be really fun. I felt that your cards were different from the exalted cards that came before them and distinguished themselves easily.

New Design Space [8 pts]

I definitely think you explored new design space with this mechanic. You attempted to dip into Exalted N, which although it didn't impress execution-wise on the specific card you put it on showed a good understanding of how to innovate with the mechanic. Also, like I just mentioned your two legendary creatures really stood out as pushing into new design space and trying to take exalted and push the boundaries. I think the cards you designed were fun and would be exciting to open and play with. My big complaint with your overall submission is the legendary theme. So far, WOTC has made 2+ sets with a legendary theme: Kamigawa Block (all 3 sets, discussed as one here) where it was a monumental failure, and Dominaria. One of Mark Rosewater's eternal maxims is: "If your theme is not at common, it's not your theme." That is the reason that Kamigawa block tried to be a legendary matters block but failed at that and why Dominaria's theme was history with a sub-sub-theme of Legendary that played mechanically into the overall theme of history. Ravnica sets are always jam-packed with content (5+ mechanics and a ton of gold cards) and the amount of support required for legendary matters would need to essentially be the Boros mechanic (not exalted) and would also have to dip into red and white cards of other guilds. And even then it might be more of a trap than anything. I guess what I am saying is that while I don't think that a legendary subtheme would have enough support in a Ravnica set to be viable, although I thought your execution on the individual cards was good IF there was enough support.

Overall, you improved this week. Last week I said to polish your designs a bit and I think you definitely did that. I do really wish you had kept Justicia as part of your submission as it

was by far your best designed and most impressive card. Nevertheless, your creativity really shone through so awesome job! If you take that creativity and work out some of the rules / templating issues, you will improve even more. Nice job!

@Faiths_Guide [88 pts]

Sincerity Blessor [15 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 5

This card's flavor doesn't really align with Orzhov, but I think it is close enough to not be a negative. I really like the innovation you showed with the devotion mechanic. This is an elegant way about caring about a color without necessarily rewarding tons of white mana symbols, which is nice. I am not 100% sure where the discussion landed on whether this triggered itself (My opinion is that it does not), but either way I would mention in the reminder text that it does/doesn't trigger itself to avoid confusion. I think you costed this correctly in terms of CMC and stats. My one very minor complaint is that I think it should cost 2WW as it strongly incentivizes drafting white and I think putting WW in the mana cost would accentuate that. This card will be quite powerful in limited (similar to Murmuring Mystic from GRN) and I like that you chose uncommon for this card. Overall, very solid design!

Zealous Persecutor [14 pts]

Rarity – 1
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 5

Black doesn't usually get 3 mana 3/3 at common, so I think this would be better at uncommon as is, particularly with the menace bonus. This is a borderline common/uncommon, but I think it is closer to uncommon as it would be pretty pushed at common. I think the term "greatest devotion" is correct rather than "highest devotion", but I am not 100% sure. I really like this new take on devotion in black; it feels like black's way to care about devotion and I also like that you made the cost have double-black in it to reinforce that this card cares about devotion and also make the Menace ability slightly easier to turn on. All in all, this is a cool way to do a twist on devotion that feels right at home in mono black.

Fervent Dismissal [12 pts]

Rarity - 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 1
Card Design – 4

This is another really cool take on devotion. You are hitting all the bases, caring about devotion if it increases, decreases, is equal (soon to come), and is the greatest. I like the “devotion decreases = drawback” concept as it is a flavor win and allows for some nonintuitive choices in terms of gameplay. The problem is that this card specifically encourages non-interaction after it is played. You don’t want to trade off with your white creatures or they will get their exiled creature back. You might not even want to play a white creature from your hand for fear of it getting hit by a removal spell. This isn’t great gameplay. And to make matters worse, this does some busted things in constructed along the same play pattern. As a one-mana unconditional exile effect, this is hyper-efficient, so much so that nonwhite decks will likely splash just for this card. If this is your only white card, the only way to make your devotion decrease is to destroy Fervent Dismissal which defeats the purpose of the drawback. Similarly, creatureless control decks can use this with the same lack of risk. All in all, I like the concept and feel like the drawback is enough to justify it within white’s color pie, but the practical gameplay considerations make this a huge risk to print, especially at one mana.

Atoning Cost [13 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 3

This card feels like an Orzhov card in both function and flavor. I like caring about having equal devotion in a card that has an otherwise balanced effect. That symmetry adds to the resonance. I don’t think the extra 1 life drain is worth the reward of having equal devotion. I think it should drain for 4 life total if your devotion is equal as that feels more worth jumping through the hoop of balancing your white and black mana symbols. I also like that this can trigger off of having no white/black permanents in play as that adds to the playability of a type of card that usually isn’t worth putting in your deck. Compared to your previous innovations of devotion, this condition is much harder to fulfill reliably. Overall, this is a fine design but not one that knocks it out of the park.

Cathedral Ghost [15 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3
Playability – 4
Card Design – 4

The devotion text can just say “...equal to your devotion to white and black.” I like that you made a creature with a more traditional devotion ability in addition to the other four innovative ones. I think you justified this as a mythic rare because it gets big quite quickly and is an exciting reward for playing Orzhov. I think you chose the right mana cost (symbols included) and am glad you gave it an evasion ability (Flying makes sense for a spirit). The graveyard exile triggered ability seems kind of like trinket text as it usually won’t be influential on the rest of the game. My guess is that it ties into the flavor of the card which is perfectly fine. All in all, this is a solid card that is a strong reward for devotion that innovates while still using the traditional execution of the devotion mechanic.

Overall Submission [19 pts]

Guild Theme [4 pts]

I think you made your cards feel like Orzhov cards for the most part. The flavor fit although naming could have been a little more indicative of the “organized crime” theme of Orzhov. I got this flavor the most from Zealous Persecutor mechanically. I think your cards would play well with other Orzhov cards, particularly gold cards and I liked how you incorporated familiar Orzhov themes into your designs (Spirits, life drain, exiling).

Creativity [5 pts]

You knocked it out of the park in terms of creativity with the devotion mechanic, exploring 4 new executions out of your 5 cards. Great job!

New Design Space [10 pts]

You explored a ton of new design space with the devotion mechanic. I particularly liked the “whenever your devotion increases” and “greatest devotion among players” variants as I feel like they would play really well and be adaptable to a ton of different designs. The design space you pioneered feels fun and worth exploring. You did an awesome job this week showing off innovations with devotion!

You had yet another great week this week! Last week I advised that you put more emphasis on the weekly theme and this week you really did that. Keep up the excellent work!

@TheCenterOfTheUniverse [87 pts]

Nightspire Operative [16 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability - 4
Card Design – 5

When you chose hideaway, I was really hoping you would design this exact card and you delivered! This is the perfect blue common for hideaway and is perfectly balanced and costed. Awesome job identifying this design space and executing it perfectly! Not much to say here, this card is flawless!

Duskmantle Surgeon [14 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 4

This is another great use of the hideaway mechanic. I like how you made the discard effect tie into the specific card you chose. Sometimes this is Duress, sometimes a Despise. That flexibility is cool and works well with hideaway as your opponent won't know exactly how to play out their cards since only you know what card you chose. I am a little confused on why this triggers in your upkeep. I think this would play much better as "B, Tap, sac CARDNAME: discard effect. Activate only as a sorcery" as that retains the functionality of not being able to get the discard effect the same turn you play this and is a cleaner template that doesn't involve a triggered ability. All in all, I like this design and how you made the hideaway choice relevant in a new and different way (not just picking the best card).

Phantasm's Hourglass [12 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 2
Card Design – 3

I don't think the sacrifice ability needs the blue mana—everything about it is black. I think it might be more interesting if the surveil ability cost a blue mana to activate and the sacrifice ability cost a black mana to activate. This would give the card a little more aesthetic

symmetry while also encouraging play in a Dimir deck. You have to invest at least 5 mana into this just to get a single creature back from your graveyard, and it has to be the exact same CMC as the card you exiled with hideaway. This seems like an ability that is going to sometimes not be relevant at all—what if you hit 0 creatures or a very small creature with the hideaway ability? Then this card just surveils every turn. Surveilling every turn is no joke and is definitely relevant while helping to enable the sacrifice ability but doesn't feel like enough payoff on its own for a 3 mana artifact. This card feels kind of clunky overall and needs a lot of mana invested and a lot of turns before it is truly reliable. I get that you were trying to make the hideaway choice interesting and not always "the best or biggest card", but this condition was just too restrictive to be reliable.

Nightmare Gorger [16 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 4

Card Design – 5

I love everything about this design from a technical and gameplay standpoint. 1) I love that you made its toughness lower so it would trade off more often and enable the death trigger. I love the gameplay around the death trigger: Your opponent won't know what CMC card you exiled, but you will so they will have to try to infer its CMC from the cards you play in the next few turns. If you play out a few 4 toughness creatures but no 2 toughness ones, they can infer that this is probably on CMC 2-3 or if you are just playing out all your creatures then they can infer you hit a land. This card rewards a lot of understanding on both player's sides and for newer players they will just enjoy killing the whole board when their bomb rare dies. This is lenticular design at its finest! Awesome job!

Eyes of the City [11 pts]

Rarity – 0

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 3

Card Design – 3

This card just doesn't feel mythic rare. Yes, it does look at the top 6 cards for its hideaway but this card was an uncommon in GRN when it cared about surveil (Enhanced Surveillance). I appreciate that you allowed this to synergize with other effects besides just hideaway—that is good thinking. I think the sacrifice ability makes this a rare, but definitely not a mythic. Given that you costed it as a mythic rare, I wish you had chosen a more exciting ability for the hideaway reward than just "put that card into your hand". 4 mana to look at the top 6 cards and pick one just isn't flashy or splashy. I think this would be okay at 3 mana as is, but also would benefit from some spicing up. My suggestion would be to lower the mana cost to 1UB, and make the sacrifice trigger into a "return this card to hand" trigger

with some mana cost and the same effect. That would make this card more of a card advantage engine that befits mythic rare.

Overall Submission [18 pts]

Guild Theme [5 pts]

All your cards have excellent Dimir flavor. Props for using actual Dimir names (Nightspire, Duskmantle) in your cards. All your cards feel sneaky, spy-like, and I think would play well with other Dimir cards. Nice job!

Creativity [4 pts]

The cards you designed showed off several new ways to use the mechanic and I think you used them in creative and innovative ways. The key to the hideaway mechanic is to make it so the hideaway choice is always interesting (and not just “pick the best card”). You accomplished this on both Duskmantle Surgeon and Nightmare Gorger and to a lesser extent on Phantasm’s Hourglass. I really liked the execution and gameplay of several of your cards, but both the Hourglass and Eyes of the City had their issues with how they used hideaway that I think could use some improvement.

Design Space [9 pts]

I was excited when you chose hideaway since I think it has a ton of unmined design space. I am glad you diverged from the hideaway lands “cast the exiled card if...” payoff and explored new executions. I think your ideas on 3 of the 5 cards were excellent (Nightspire Operative, Duskmantle Surgeon, Nightmare Gorger) and really used fun and innovative design space. I felt that Phantasm’s Hourglass tried to do this with its CMC restriction, but didn’t get there on its execution. Only Eyes of the City really disappointed in how it used the card selected off of hideaway. Overall, I think you did really well with Hideaway and designed some fun and choice-intensive cards.

Last week you delivered an excellent submission and this week’s was top notch as well. My only advice at this point would be to make sure your mythic rares really feel mythic. Keep up the good work!

@ChuckTesta [73 pts]

Preacher of Rage [13 pts]

Rarity – 1

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 3

Card Design – 4

This card definitely feels like a Gruul card. I think the evoke ability is costed correctly in any case but the power level of the base body is quite strong for a common. It is borderline, but I think this might be better as an uncommon as this can get in for a ton of damage out of nowhere (particularly on a creature with trample / evasion). This ability, while strong and usually impactful, is usually less so when done at sorcery speed as the opponent can make a good chump block. That means that this card is much, much more valuable as the creature side and will be cast with evoke much less (basically only when it wins the game on the spot). All in all, this is a solid design.

Conjurer of Strength [10 pts]

Rarity – 0

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 3

Card Design – 2

This card is very, very similar to Briarhorn from Lorwyn. It is the same rarity, P/T, CMC, has flash and evoke, and the same etb effect. The only difference is the evoke cost and the leave the battlefield ability. That card was already one of the best cards in the set and a borderline uncommon and putting the leave the battlefield ability on it makes it a surefire rare. Also, the ETB and LTB abilities can be combined to say “When Conjurer of Strength enters or leaves the battlefield...PUMP EFFECT” for the same functionality but better templating. At uncommon, this card is super strong and giving the ability to make this be 3 mana for +6/+6 is even more of an upside. Additionally, while I agree that GGG is probably right for the evoke cost, that mana cost alone pushes it even more to rare. I do like what you have done with the ETB and LTB ability on the same card—that is a good innovation with the evoke mechanic, but this card is so similar to an existing card that it doesn’t really feel like much of an original design.

Infernal Beast [13 pts]

Rarity – 1

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 3

Card Design – 4

Comparing this card to Affectionate Indrik from GRN (both have the same CMC, P/T, and etb ability), this card blows it out of the water. Yes this is 2 colors, but that is not much of a drawback in limited for a Ravnica set and the fact that this has an additional mode and this the opponent for 4 when it dies if it was cast normally in addition is a significant increase in power level. This card is great when it is cast normally (a 2-for-1) and when it is evoke (4 damage to a creature and to a player). In digital, this card could be an issue because you could stack the evoke and the ETB fight triggers wrong so it would die before it fought the creature. Also, fight abilities almost always target creatures you don’t control so you can’t

accidentally misclick and target one of your own creatures. These are not huge considerations but are common thought about at WOTC. I think this card is a borderline rare (probably closer to rare than to uncommon) because of its flexibility and power level but I like the card concept overall. I think with some tweaks to the numbers it would play out a little better. First, I would lower the evoke cost so it is 2 mana less than the mana cost to differentiate the two abilities. If I am on 5 mana, holding this one more turn is usually right since the payoff is much bigger if I cast this normally. Reducing the evoke costs makes the choice to evoke it more meaningful. I would also change its power from 3 to 4 to reduce the power level slightly. I also really like the innovation of having a different LTB ability than the ETB ability. Nice innovation with evoke! Overall, solid concept that needs some tweaks.

Scourge of the Skies [13 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 4

Card Design – 2

Like Preacher of Rage, this card is really similar to an existing Card (Cloudthresher from Lorwyn). Although the cards have some slightly different numbers, the primary function (big + expensive evoke creature that ETB to kill fliers) is exactly the same. I do like your version better as the mana cost, stats, and destroy all creatures with flying ability is a little cleaner than Cloudthresher, but this still basically the same card and that hurt you.

Ari, Martyr of Fire [10 pts]

Rarity – 1

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 0

Playability – 2

Card Design – 5

This card is too good at drawing cards for RG. Red doesn't get one-shot pure card advantage; it can break even on cards (Tormenting voice) or impulsive draw (Act on Impulse) but it doesn't get to go up on cards. And green's card draw is exclusively tied to its creatures and although it can draw cards equal to a creature's power (and has in the past with cards/effects like Hunter's Prowess), putting card draw as an etb effect on a creature undermines its weakness. In short, +2 cards on an ETB effect for a creature is not acceptable in RG and is a color pie break. As for the card itself, I like how you tied each ability to one another. I also like how you subtly indicated the power of the getting both abilities at the same time by making the evoke cost greater than the mana cost. I also like how you gave it a low toughness that pairs well with you wanting it to die and trigger the second ability. Nice job signaling with your design! This card is basically a guaranteed 3 to 4 for 1, which makes me think it might be better at mythic rare as this absolutely buries the

opponent, but it is borderline. All in all, I like the technical elements of the card a lot but the color pie is a problem as is the overall power level.

Overall Submission [14 pts]

Guild Theme [4 pts]

Flavor-wise, your cards didn't feel particularly Gruul in terms of their names, but mechanically you created 5 creatures that all played into the Gruul theme of beating down and dealing damage. I felt that your cards would play well with other Gruul cards for this reason.

Creativity [1 pts]

Ari, Martyr of Fire and Preacher of Rage showed a lot of creativity and novelty but your other cards did not. Both Conjuror of Strength and Scourge of Skies (and to a much lesser and slightly different extent Infernal Beast) were almost carbon copies of existing cards with evoke. Although you showed a lot of ingenuity and innovation with the evoke mechanic, it really hurt that you mimicked existing cards. Obviously I can't know if this was intentional or not, but either way it stresses the importance of researching previous card designs.

New Design Space [9 pts]

Evoke has a pretty tight design restriction: it cares about creature entering or leaving the battlefield. I think you did a great job of finding new ways to innovate with this mechanic, including having both ETB and LTB abilities on the same card and having them both be the same or be different. I think the design space you missed out on that you could have showcased was having an evoke cost that included something other than mana, as that hadn't been done before and could create a different dynamic from previous cards if executed well. Still, I liked how you took a mechanic with a lot of restrictions and found 2 new way to make cards with it that felt distinct from other designs, so nice job!

Last week I said to work on costing and making sure that the cards you designed are cards that people would want to play. This week I think you improved greatly in making cards that people would be excited to play, although a few were too pushed. Next week, reign in your power levels a little bit. Remember, your cards don't need to be super powerful to demonstrate a good concept.

@Temurzoa [78 pts]

Senate Prober [13 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 2

Card Design – 4

I see what you were trying to do with this card and in principle I like it but I think the execution leads to some conflicting gameplay. First, the tap ability has relevance on your turn only, meaning that it only has use when you are attacking or want to attack. If not, this effectively investigates if your opponent controls a creature with toughness two or less which seems a little strange on the face of it. I like and get the flavor of interrogating a creature and only getting evidence (a clue) out of a weaker one. I like that you chose toughness here instead of power as well as that fits the flavor. My biggest problem with this card is the mixed message it sends. The ability wants to encourage aggression but the creature itself is...a 4 mana 1/4? That is just the antithesis of what the ability wants to be paired with. On top of that, blue is not usually an aggressive color so this doesn't exactly play into either the color's typical strategy or the Azorius guild itself. The latter is okay, but the former hurts a bit more. Also, I like the flavor win of tapping down a weak creature, but usually you want to remove stronger blockers not weaker ones from a gameplay perspective. All of these factors make me think that this card would be better off as a 3W 3/2 with the same ability. White also has more of an inquisitor vibe than blue, so this would be fine from a flavor perspective. All in all, I think you came up with a cool, flavorful card but didn't synergize the ability with an appropriate body/color.

Incriminating Evidence [12 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 2

Playability – 2

Card Design – 4

This card is a very strong reward for investigate as a 1-mana unconditional removal spell. White isn't supposed to get this efficient removal though. Declaration in stone, path to exile, swords to plowshares, and to a lesser extent Dispatch all fall into the category of color pie breaks and/or severe bends. I understand that while its CMC is 1 the actual mana cost is closer to 3 since you have to crack a clue to enable it. For that reason I think it is a bend rather than a break. Once again, the flavor of this card is quite strong but the gameplay needs some work. "Tap a creature" is so worthless that this card basically has no text unless you have sacrificed a clue. That makes this a good build around for the investigate deck which is fine but even in that deck this is always either an A or an F, and I think this card would be better balanced if it had a more meaningful base effect and cost a little more. My suggestion would be changing the mana cost to 1W, card type to instant, and the effect to "Exile target creature, then return it to the battlefield under its owner's control unless you sacrificed a clue this turn." This allows the base card to be able to blink creatures and have some functionality while maintaining a strong reward for clues. Like your previous card, I like the idea/concept you presented but needed to work on the execution to make it more balanced.

Prosecute [16 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 4
Card Design – 5

This card really knocks it out of the park on a couple of levels. First, the base card is perfectly costed. 1U for a counter unless you pay 2 effect is a balanced rate. But the effect you chose to staple onto this card is fantastic. First, it addresses a huge problem these type of counterspells have: they lose a ton of value in the late game. With your innovation, now this can effectively “cycle” for 2 installments of 2 mana when it is a dead card late in the game. This reminds me of Censor from Amonkhet but a little more nuanced. Second, this card gives the opponent a choice when they can pay (particularly when you are low on cards). Do I let my spell that I don’t care too much about be countered or do I pay the 2 mana and give them an extra draw? This will be a meaningful decision enough of the time that it really adds to the overall card design. My only complaint is that the name really isn’t too great a fit, but still you designed an amazing card so props to you!

Errant Inquisitor [11 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 2
Playability – 2
Card Design – 3

First off, I think this card should be either a Human Cleric or Human Advisor—Wizard just doesn’t really fit. The first ability is extremely similar to Mentor of the Meek which makes this a color pie bend as Mentor of the Meek is a color pie bend. To reduce the severity of the bend and limit white’s card draw, I would probably make it say “nontoken creature”. I understand what you were trying to do with the second and third abilities but in conjunction they make it very difficult to calculate this creature’s power when you have multiple counters and multiple clues in play. Additionally, if this creature has one less damage marked on it than its toughness (say it is a 5/4 from 2 +1/+1 counters and a single clue in play and it blocked a 3 toughness creature) and you crack a clue at the end of turn, this will die due to state based effects before the trigger that puts counters on it will resolve. Considering the similarities of this card to Tireless Tracker and the common play patterns with that card, this will happen too often to justify both the second and third abilities. I would recommend consolidating them into one ability in some way. On raw power level, this draws card and gets huge itself, the latter of which doesn’t feel particularly white (the 2 +1/+1 counters per clue feels more green in terms of the amount of added stats). Overall, this card has some playability issues with the second and third abilities and a little too much power for its cost with the whole package. I like what you were trying to do here, but the execution had a bit too many issues for it to really shine.

Perdus, Supreme Inquisitor [11 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 0

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 1

Card Design – 4

Cards shouldn't reference the stack in rules text (and this card just doesn't need to) so that part should be removed. Additionally, revealing a card when it is in your hand has some rules issues and complexity with it, so I think the template should definitely be to just reveal the top card of your library after you scry. I like the balance and symmetry you struck with the two abilities in principle. One creates clues when you cast spells on your turn and if you hold up some mana to crack them you can counter your opponents stuff. The play pattern here is clear and rewards savvy play and good mana management which I like. To your point about counteracting draw-go decks, this card is enough of a reward that casting my Opt/Anticipate/low CMC cantrip on my turn to get a clue doesn't really disrupt your gameplan. I don't think this handicaps draw go enough to make it a consideration. I question whether it needs to make more than one clue on your turn (should it just trigger off of the first spell each turn?). I am not 100% sure, so I won't make a judgement either way. This card is all about the last ability, though, and that is where the major problems begin. First, this is very reminiscent of Counterbalance which is not a good thing. Caring about the card type is interesting and balances things since the type of deck this is in doesn't really play too many creatures, but basically your opponent will almost never resolve an instant or a sorcery. That is just not a fun pattern as the opponent is incentivized to just do nothing for several turns to hold up multiple removal spells and tap you out of mana as you sacrifice your clues. On top of all this, you get to draw a card when the clue sacrifice ability resolves in addition to countering their spell. The last ability should definitely read: "Sacrifice a Clue: Scry 1, then reveal the top card of your library. Counter target spell that shares a card type with it." In this way, you trade the card draw from the clue for a counterspell and don't bury the opponent in cards while you are countering their spells. All in all, this just isn't going to be fun to play against (which is understandable to an extent since this is a control finisher afterall) but the power level and the counter ability just make this way too degenerate to see print.

Overall Submission [15 pts]**Guild Theme: [5 pts]**

All your cards were flavorful to Azorius and Investigate while matching that theme to the mechanical execution. Nice job! I think your cards would play well with existing Azorius cards and for the most part played into a more controlling play style while also allowing the potential for other styles to exist.

Creativity: [4 pts]

You were quite creative with how you used investigate in terms of what triggered it and what the rewards were for sacrificing a clue (Prosecute was the best example of this). I felt that you could have innovated with the mechanic itself more by designing cards that investigated

multiple times or worked in a slightly different way for example. Still, you did quite a nice job coming up with new ways to use a rather inflexible mechanic.

New Design Space: [6 pts]

You didn't mine a ton of new design space in this submission; rather, you explored new and creative executions of investigate and clues. Prosecute was an excellent example of this, and Incriminating Evidence gave a reward for having sacrificed a clue which was cool and new. I felt that Perdue pair some new abilities with investigate but didn't really innovate with investigate itself and that Errant Inquisitor felt a little bit too much like Mentor of the Meek + Tireless Tracker to really be new and innovative. Exploring flavorful designs helped with your overall resonance but I think you fell a bit short on finding new design space overall. I agree that there isn't too much to find with Investigate as you pointed out, but I think you still left some fun space on the table that could have been used here.

Last week I asked you to work on justifying your build arounds but that was a relatively minor fix. This week your problem throughout the entire submission was playability. With the exception of Persecute which was perfect (awesome job by the way!), each of your cards had some sort of issue with play pattern, power level balance, technical gameplay, or subtle interactions that really hurt your scores. Next week, make sure to think about how your cards will actually be played and the implications of each part of your design.

@ningyounk [89 pts]

Pontiff of Tithes [14 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 3

Card Design – 4

This is a solid common design that demonstrates the mechanic with a small twist that on exploit. Typically, I would keep the exploit effects at common to static effects (not affected by the exploited creature's qualities) but because the effect is so minor and so easy to track I think it is okay. Generally, this will be very low impact and will most of the time sacrifice itself but I think that is okay as this is both an exploit enabler and exploit fodder. This is a solid design for a common that is around or just below replacement level. My one suggestion is that it might be better as a 0/4 to make the body slightly better and also gain a little more life. Overall, this is a good common design that you should be proud of.

Eternal Indebted [12 pts]

Rarity – 1

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 2
Card Design – 4

This card's recursive design contributes to both its strengths and its weaknesses.

Weaknesses: 1) This type of card always entered the battlefield tapped or can't block.

Without that ability, it is just too good a blocker. Can't block plays well with the aggressive body and fits the spirit theme so I would go with that. 2) If you get two of these on the battlefield with counters on them, this can chump block ad nauseum. This won't happen too often, but it is still a consideration. This card is a borderline rare / uncommon based on its recursive nature and the overall flexibility. Now to the strengths: 1) I thinking all the numbers (cost, stats, counters, etc.) are perfect. 2) I like the base concept and the flavor. 3) I really like the use of a +1/+1 counter as both a marker and as a reward for exploit. This is a really elegant design that uses a simple game tool multiple ways. Overall, this card is quite a good design that suffered in terms of playability because it needed to not be able to block.

Claim Interests [14 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 0
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 5

I am a little confused by the card's name. I don't see any connection between it and the mechanics. This is a really good reward for exploit on a number of axes. First, I like that it breaks into new design space with triggering off exploit from the graveyard. This feels like an appropriate reward and also is a good source of card advantage that feels very Orzhov. I also like that this card encourages exploit because it makes good exploit fodder, so it fits perfectly in the archetype / play pattern it suggests. I think the mana cost and the main effect are perfectly costed. Since this is so good at making exploit fodder, I think it might be slightly safer to cost the recursion ability at 1W, but that is a minor complaint. Overall, this is an excellent design!

Luton, Tyrannic Baron [15 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 5

This is a really awesome design! I like how each part of the card relates to 3 (exploit, mana, stats); the symmetrical design adds to the resonance. As for the abilities, in general most mechanics are not that comprehensible or elegant when put three times in series but I think

exploit is simple enough that it works with no issues. I also think that the ability of eating up to 3 cards out of a graveyard is a great fusion of black abilities that will be fun, flexible, and perfect for an exciting rare. My only concern is that it can exile and recast the exploited cards (including itself). This is actually kind of a big issue as it can keep recurring itself and a few other things but could easily be fixed by making the trigger say "...exploits another creature..." or make it so this creature can't be sacrificed. All in all, this is a great design that is unique, exciting, and flavorful!

Collector of Kings [15 pts]

Rarity – 2

Templating – 1

Flavor – 1

Color Pie – 3

Playability – 4

Card Design – 4

This is a really cool variant on the exploit mechanic. I love how the flavor perfectly fits the "exploit legendary" and makes the reward of sacrificing what is likely to be a good creature worth the cost. There is a little bit of anti-synergy here as you are sacrificing a creature for an effect that wants you to have more creatures, but overall I think this isn't too consequential. I also like how you used the "Elesh Norn" ability as the reward as it feels very Orzhov to take from the opponent and give to yourself. I also really like how you used the +1/+1 counters as both a reward and a marker again as you did with Eternal Indebted. This shows a lot of understanding of the nuances of design and completely solves the memory issue that would come with the effect without it. This card is a really innovative and exciting design—the only downside is that a lot of the time it may just be a 5/5 for 6 since you may not always have a legendary creature (also props for not making this a legendary as that would just confuse people). Still, this is an awesome design!

Overall Submission [19 pts]

Guild Theme [5 pts]

Each of your cards felt at home in Orzhov and played into the grindy theme that it promotes. Your cards exhibited life gain, recursion, spirits, and "take from you, give to me" elements that are all emblematic of Orzhov. These cards would feel right at home in an Orzhov deck. Nice job fitting the flavor to the mechanics!

Creativity [5 pts]

You demonstrated a lot of innovation with the Exploit mechanic. From using it multiple times on the same card to using a "legendary" variant, you pushed the envelope with Exploit to great success. Your mechanical execution was on point and only made your creative designs better. Nice job!

New Design Space [9 pts]

I really liked both your new uses of the Exploit mechanic and your mechanical implementations with more traditional uses. Both your rare / mythic designs were near perfect and your uncommons were quite good too. You pioneered a lot of new space with

both exploit rewards and exploit payoffs. Excellent job pushing the boundaries of the mechanic while also keeping the cards fun and elegant.

Last week was quite good and this week was even better. You nailed it and really showed an excellent combination of creativity, innovation, and strong execution and tight technical design. Keep up the excellent work!

@brcien [64 pts]

Conduit of Indulgence [13 pts]

Rarity – 1
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 4

I like the innovation you included on this card by modifying the tribute payment from a positive effect for you to a positive effect for your opponent. My main concern is that the new wording you used "...tribute wasn't paid" is so similar to the default wording "...tribute was paid" that it will often be mistaken. For this reason, I would consider this card as an uncommon as that potential confusion might be too much for common. I am not 100% sure on this, so let's call it a borderline common / uncommon. As for the card itself, I think the concept is pretty good although the choices could be closer to each other. I think this would be better if it gained 4 life rather than 3, but again this is a minor complaint. Overall, this is a card that shows a solid innovation on tribute is a success.

Duplicitous Prioress [11 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie - 3
Playability – 2
Card Design – 2

The hallmark of a good tribute card is making the two choices the opponent has as close in power as possible to make the decision interesting and variable from situation to situation. Fanatic of Xenagos, Nessian Wild's Ravager, Flame-wreathed Pheonix, and Ornitharch are all good examples of cards that make for interesting tribute designs. The problem with this card is that the choices are just not close to equal. A 3/6 vigilance for 5 is below replacement level and a 5 mana destroy target permanent that leaves behind an 0/3 is

above replacement level by a good margin. The opponent will almost always let this be a creature if they have something better than a 3/6 in play and if they have nothing that they are sad about losing then they will just let you kill something meaningless. All in all, good tribute cards give the opponent a tough choice and this will just never really give the opponent a choice that isn't obvious.

Guardian Megathrulls [10 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 1
Card Design – 2

Similar to Duplicitous Prioress, this card just doesn't give a meaningful choice to the opponent. If they can deal with a 2/6 they will just pay the tribute and if not then you get a 4 mana 0/4 that gains 4 life most of the time. Both modes are below replacement level while failing to give the opponent a difficult choice. Tribute cards get to be undercosted for their effects because the opponent gets to choose and this is overcosted by a lot. I appreciate that you made the triggered ability choose a creature's toughness for the life gain so that you can potentially gain more than 4 life, but that doesn't do enough to redeem this design. Overall, like your previous card this just doesn't pull its weight in either mode and doesn't do a good job as a tribute card.

Syndicate Nightblade [11 pts]

Rarity - 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 2
Card Design- 2

See my comments on Duplicitous Prioress as this is basically the same card but modified to be appropriate for uncommon rarity. Again, this just doesn't create a meaningful choice, although I will note that a 3/4 first strike is better than a 3/6 vigilance so you are a little closer to the mark on this one, but still missed by a good deal.

Angel of Miscreation [13 pts]

Rarity – 2
Templating – 1
Flavor – 1
Color Pie – 3
Playability – 3
Card Design – 3

This card rewards playing with tribute cards in an interesting way. I like that you get rewarded no matter what and that the opponent chooses. I would suggest that the rewards are balanced a little more (gain 4 life / drain 4 life) to have more symmetry. This card is a little weak and kind of unexciting for a rare, but rewards playing tribute in a nice way.

Overall Submission [6 pts]

Guild Theme [2 pts]

I was a little disappointed by how generic your cards seemed. None of them screamed Orzhov, either from the mechanics or the flavor. You hit on the life gain and creature destruction but didn't really delve into Orzhov's more iconic aspects of "draining" and feeling like organized crime. I think your cards would play okay with other Orzhov cards, but really nothing to write home about.

Creativity [1 pts]

Aside from creature keywords you only used two real mechanics on your cards (besides tribute): life gain and "destroy". That made it feel like instead of designing 5 cards that you designed 2 cards and had 3 repeats. In fact, Syndicate Nightblade and Duplicitous Prioress were so similar that they are basically the same card with the same play pattern, save for rarity and color. You showed a flash of brilliance with Conduit of Indulgence but other than that your creativity didn't show in this submission.

New Design Space [3 pts]

You explored new space with Tribute with Conduit of Indulgence which I thought was interesting and opened up a lot of new possibilities for how you could combine effects with tribute. Unfortunately, that was the end of the innovation with your submission. Your remaining four cards didn't show anything new, innovative, or interesting. And for the cards that used tribute in the same way as it was used in Born of the Gods, you didn't innovate or branch out with the effects, instead repeating the same staple effects on two cards.

Last week I mentioned that you showed a lot of innovation/creativity but lacked on the technical aspects. This week, I think you improved a lot on the technical aspects but really lacked on the innovation/creativity. While you challenged yourself with tribute in that it is a hard mechanic to design for, your submission just didn't show anything exciting or innovative and that hurt you on each and every card.