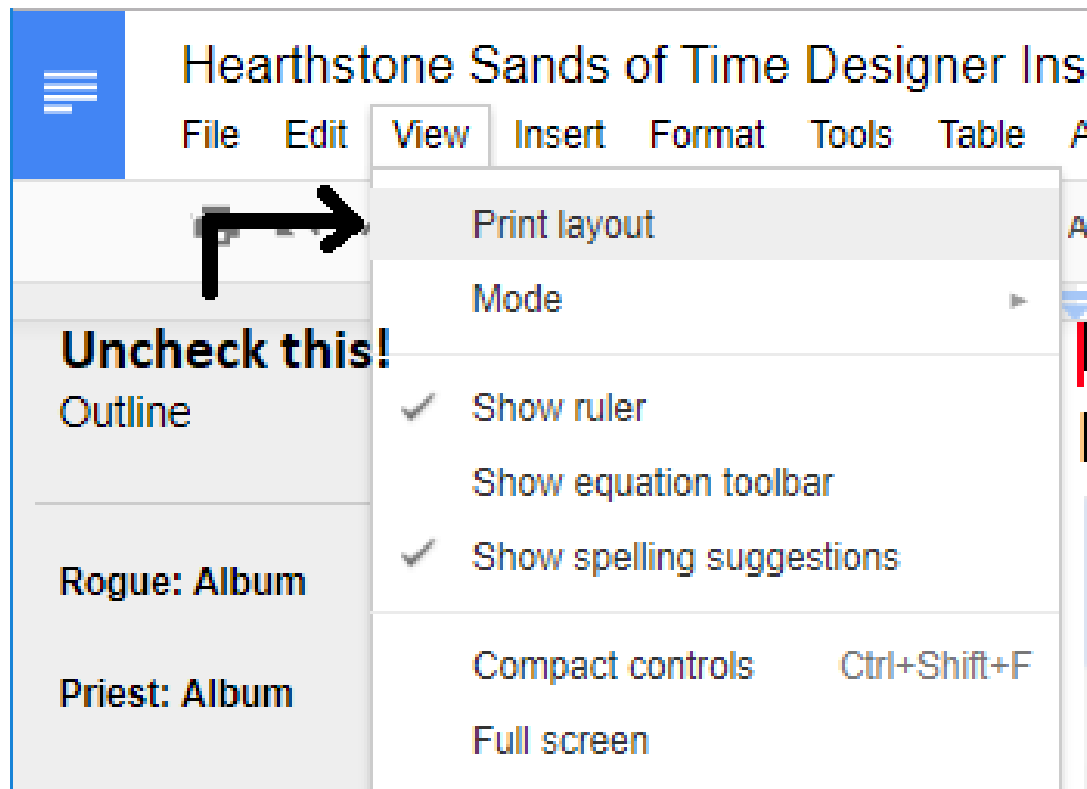
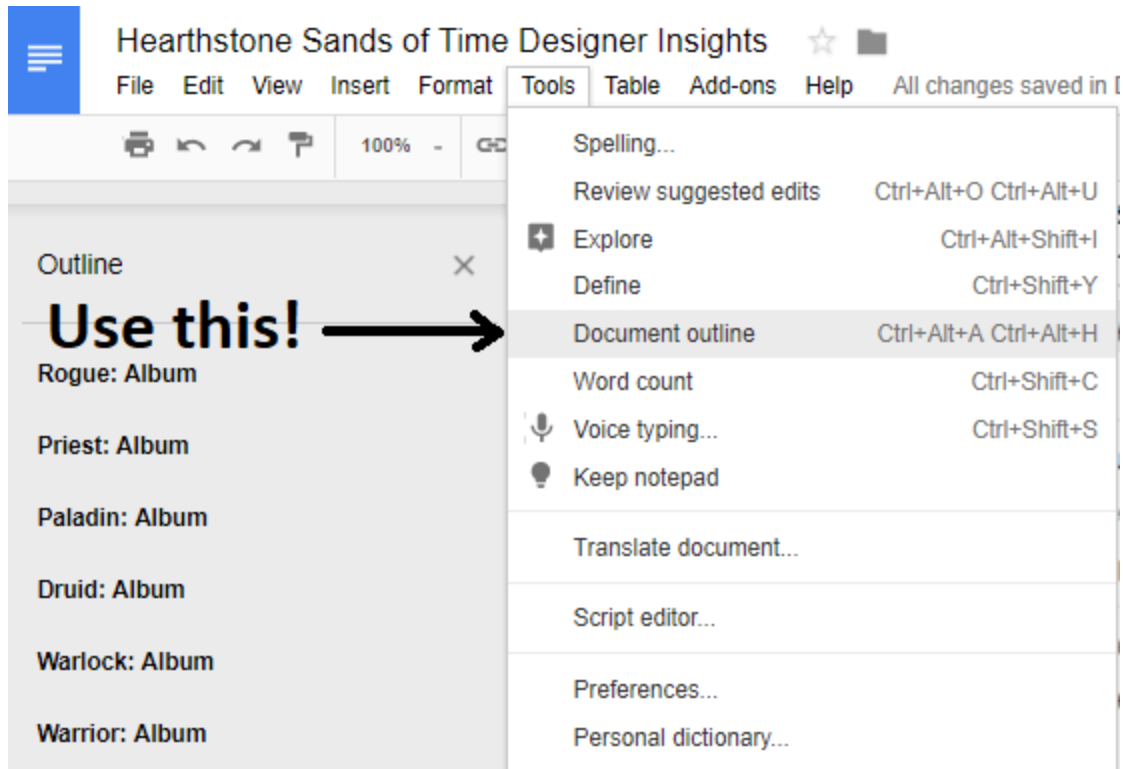


NOTE: For optimal viewing, please switch Google Docs OFF of Print Layout for this document.



You can also use the Document Outline feature to jump from place to place on this monstrosity.



Introduction

My Greetings!

Since I want to talk a lot about the overarching concepts of this expansion but I also don't want to clog the reddit post, these first few paragraphs will sort of serve as the "extended introduction." This ~~150~~ 160 page document can be intimidating, but if nothing else, I think this part is worth glancing at.

First of all, Why?

A reasonable question to ask of someone who just wrote over 45,000 words about their made-up ideas for a particular card game. Throughout my entire life, I've had this odd inclination towards game design. Every time I picked up a new game I would have the urge to see if I could design an addition to it - a new class for MapleStory, a new champion for league, a new card for hearthstone. I really loved creating these fan-made "extensions," getting really detailed with exactly how this new concept would work despite the fact that I never really expected it to ever exist. Up through around halfway through high school, I really had no idea what drove me to do this. It wasn't until I started getting into Hearthstone card design on Hearthpwn, entering into contests, and discussing design principles with other people, that I realized what I was doing wasn't just getting a kick out of being in the fan creations section of some obscure forum. I was

doing game design, at least, some primitive form of it, and I enjoyed it because it fundamentally revolved around creating something to make other people happy.

Once I had a name to call this interest of mine, it really began to blossom. I got heavily involved with the customhearthstone Discord community, where I programmed a bot to help users create cards in a more streamlined way which has since been used 16,000 times. I've continued to make custom cards, constantly getting better and better. I moved on from creating custom classes to custom expansions, and with that, card creation has gone from a favorite pastime to something more. Finally, we arrive at present day, where I'm finishing up my final project, Sands of Time, before submitting my portfolio to Blizzard in an attempt to achieve my dream and get an internship on the design team.

So, that's "why" in a sense: it makes me happy to make other people happy. Likewise, I hope that this expansion can ignite the same spark of creativity for you, in the same way that hearthstone lights that spark for me.

Expansion Themes

In order to make this expansion cohesive, there are certain common threads that run throughout it, both in terms of flavor and mechanics.

Flavor Themes

The "story" behind this expansion is somewhat inspired by the Hearth and Home cinematic. In it, a young girl finds the Hearthstone game box at a seemingly random location in the snow, just in time to save her from the cold. I took this idea, and as Ben Brode says, "Given that this is true, what else is true?" We see all sorts of people from different walks of life inside the inn - how did they *all* come across the box? It's almost as if the box travels through time and space seemingly on its own will, bringing people into the world of Hearthstone.

Time travel is a relatively common happening in WoW, to the point where the Bronze Dragonflight and their allies take special measures to constantly protect the timelines from those who would tamper with them. Certainly, they would have a thing or two to say about a magical box hurtling through spacetime.

Fundamentally, this expansion is about time travel. More specifically, it relates to time travel, dimensional travel, parallel worlds, Warcraft history, the Caverns of Time and the surrounding desert, and the crazy sorts of things that happen when you take people from all across the multiverse and put them all in an inn to play card games against each other.

Mechanical Themes

Most notably, this expansion introduces a new card type: **Rifts**. These are temporary portals that lead to some of the most important moments in Warcraft history, that are used by those who would try to alter course of history as well as those whose duty it is to stop them.

In-game, a Rift functions like the Permanents that we are starting to get more and more acquainted with, except that they last for a certain duration - essentially, they are “temporary permanents,” pardoning the oxymoron.

A rift looks like a minion with no Attack or Health, with an indicator beneath its Mana Cost that displays how long it lasts for. Note that a Rift loses duration at the end of each of your turns, after it activates any end-of-turn effect it might have.

Other than the fact that they eventually expire, they follow all the rules that other permanents do: they take up a board slot, and can't be affected by anything. You can read more on how I designed rifts around these constraints in the design blurbs for the various rifts featured in this expansion.

In an expansion related to Time and its manipulation, there is a new focus on triggered effects, auras, and other persistent effects that take place multiple times or over a period of time. You'll see this especially on Rifts, and in a string of neutral minions called Timewalkers.

We'll also see some interesting new card draw options, and even a few tools for deck manipulation, including cards that shuffle interesting things into our decks and find ways to fish them out.

Each class has a card which generates copies of a particularly fun and interesting card all the way back from classic - revisiting our past through time travel.

Several cards in the neutral set interact with minions and cards that have very specific mana costs. This creates some very interesting deckbuilding decisions that vary from class to class, and challenges the player to find creative ways to best utilize a particularly niche effect.

No expansion about time travel is complete without the Bronze and Infinite dragonflight, so we'll see more Dragon synergy than usual in the neutral set.

And, to match the crazy happenings that come out of time travel, some of these legendary minions have some insane and unprecedented rule-bending effects!

Each class also has their distinct set of themes, which you can see more of in the introductions to each class's set. For the most part, each class has a few cards dedicated to two archetypes, and a few more that are more generally useful or require innovation beyond currently existing deck types.

Plans for the Future

This expansion turned out much better than my previous, an expansion about Icecrown Citadel that I posted on the customhearthstone subreddit just before Knight of the Frozen Throne came out. However, I would consider it to have many faults that I want to try to improve on for next time.

- a) More cohesive flavor from the get-go.
- b) A more consistent distribution of rarities.
- c) A smaller size, so that I can iterate faster when I learn a flaw in the expansion's approach.

I do have a plan for my next expansion's theme and my revised approach, but that'll be a secret for now. Depending on how well this expansion is received on the sub, and how the internship process goes, I may be back again in a few months, hopefully with an even better product. As for the more distant future, it's hard to tell whether I'll end up in computer science or game design, but regardless, I hope to be in the games industry, and I hope that this is a reasonable step towards that goal.

If you have comments, questions, concerns, praise, criticisms, advice, or anything, please leave a comment! I'll be extremely active and open to discuss some of my more questionable decisions, and any mistakes you guys point out I'll be sure to fix!

Well, that's just about everything - Thanks for stopping by!

~ DKP

Preface to this Document

Hello everyone, welcome to my designer insights doc. For those that haven't seen this before, it's where I document how and why I design each of the cards I make, for three reasons:

- For anyone that's curious as to how I create my set, or for people who want to learn from me.
- For myself, to make sure that I'm approaching card design with some sort of strategy, and to evaluate my thought processes.
- For record-keeping, as a way to look back on my thought processes in the future, and maybe to show to blizzard if I ever do get the chance to apply.

I'm planning to do this for an entire expansion-sized set of cards. Not only that, but I'm planning to go into more detail on each card, so it's going to be *really* long. In order to desperately try to combat this, I'm starting in the very early stages of the set. This could result in me creating writeups for cards that I eventually delete - this is fine, in fact, making writeups of poorly designed cards may help me to see that they are poorly designed.

At the time of writing this, I am hardly 15% done with my expansion, I've started on another project, and I'm starting college soon. There's a considerable possibility that this expansion never sees the light of day, so I'm not going to say too much else here. For now.

Update: I managed to find time at and before college, and it seems like despite its many failings this set is indeed going to see the light of day, especially since I'm going to apply for the design internship and I'd like to have another completed project under my belt. Onwards!

Update 2: Holy crap, I actually managed to finish it, and even clean it up a bit. I hope you guys enjoy!

“Vocab”

This sounds a bit silly but I might use some made-up words in these insight things. Here is a list so that you can be less confused.

Time Set: Since the name of my expansion won't be final until I finally release it, I tend to refer to it just as the “Time set” during design.

Bottom-Up: Designing the mechanics (effect and synergies) of a card and then finding appropriate flavor (the character/story/place in the set) to match it.

Top-Down: The opposite of bottom-up, finding flavor for a card and then creating mechanics to match it.

[Update]: Embarrassing, but I did not know that bottom-up and top-down already existed as game design terms. I thought I had invented them myself. Good thing that my definitions happen to match theirs, though.

Middle-Out: A fusion between top-down and bottom-up, where you develop the mechanics and the flavor simultaneously. Commonly used for legendaries or other entities where it's important for them to have both an interesting effect and excellent flavor.

/5 system or /5 reviews: Something I did to try and increase the quality of this set was to create a set of cards, have myself and other people rate their designs out of 5, then add them up and rework the cards that fell below a certain threshold. It felt like a decent compromise between having a say as to whether or not my own cards were good, and allowing community feedback to override me.

Best 9 or 9 Best: At some point in the future after I finish this project, I will be sending them an email with my 9 best cards to try and talk about my future working at Hearthstone. This means I'll be looking through all my cards with the help of some other people to find the 9 best designed or most symbolic cards out of the roughly 450 that I'll have created by then.

[Update]: This is no longer the plan as I have a more direct route, the design internship.

Forgotten Cards: This expansion has a set of cards, one for each class, which generates a spell from the classic or basic set in some way or another. This cycle of cards came about for two reasons: One, because it's sort of flavorful with the theme of Time Travel (returning to the

past), and two, because for pretty much every class I could name a spell that I thought was really cool and had a ton of potential combos but couldn't see play because it didn't do much on its own. One of the most effective ways to make a card like this useful is to attach it to a body, and so in practice hopefully these cards serve as fun reminders of some of the "Forgotten" cards of Hearthstone's past as well as an interesting way to produce potentially very strong synergies.

First Pass/Second Pass/Third Pass/Etc: Under the /5 system, I make 9 cards for a class, get them reviewed, delete the bad ones, create new cards until there are 9, get more reviews, etc. I call each of these cycles a Pass, so the "Second Pass" of the Paladin set would be creating cards to fill the gaps after the first review.

Format

Each of these writeups follows a predefined format.

Each class and the neutral section first begins with a header that talks about general themes of that particular segment, as well as the successes and challenges I had with the design process. There is also a link to each class's imgur album.

The entry for each card starts with the card's name, followed by an image of that card in some approximately smaller size. Then, there are four entries:

(Approach): This will either be top-down, bottom-up, or middle out. Here, I describe the method I used to approach the design of this card and why.

(Mechanics): Then, I'll talk about the mechanics of the card, meaning the process of how I came up with the card's actual effect and the specific numbers it has.

(Flavor): Next, I'll describe the card's flavor and how I arrived at it. This comes before the mechanics section for a top-down card, and simultaneously in a flavor/mechanics section if the card was designed with middle-out.

(Comments): Finally, I leave myself a space to make some miscellaneous remarks about the card. This could range from something particularly hard, to a particular small detail of the card that doesn't really belong in the other sections, to something entirely unrelated or even nothing at all.

Art

As a designer with no artistic ability, I rely heavily on the works of artists from a variety of sources in order to bring my creations to life. I didn't realize until it was too late that I had forgotten to gather the names of all the artists whose work I used in the process of making these

cards. I don't mean to claim anyone else's work as my own, and if any of the original artists stumble upon this post, just let me know and I'll give you credit specifically.

Rogue: Album

Rogue was the first class I designed for this expansion. Out of all the classes, Rogue's cards are the most thematically unified - whether or not this makes the set feel repetitive or flavorful is something I'm curious to see based on people's feedback.

Ethereals are extremely devious beings that travel through dimensions stealing powerful artifacts. This made them the best candidate for what I based the rogue set on flavor-wise. Every card except for one (because I ran out of ethereal art) depicts an ethereal.

In terms of gameplay themes, this set was designed to explore a variety of rogue mechanics. These are: Revitalization of **Combo**, bounce Rogue (a slower version of quest Rogue), a bit of Miracle support, as well as just general Rogue tools.

Consortium Smuggler



Top-Down - This card was designed in an interesting way - originally Consortium Smuggler had a different effect which I couldn't remember, so I reworked it. Instead of trying a new way to accomplish whatever mechanic the old Consortium Smuggler was built around, I decided to rebuild the card around the flavor of Consortium Smuggler.

Flavor: The Consortium is a group of ethereal thieves and smugglers. The way that it gives you a Coin by slipping it onto the top of your deck for you to draw later is much more sneaky and smuggle-y than your typical “Add a coin to your hand.”

Mechanics: Here is one of our miracle support cards for the set. Adding a coin to your hand is always cool, but as a straight up Battlecry, it's *far* stronger than Razorpetal Lasher, and is also pretty boring with Tomb Pillager existing. So instead we use this indirect mechanic to get coins into your hand. It synergizes well with the existing miracle archetype, where a Coin is good enough to be run on its own, as well as the large amount of Combo cards in the set.

Comments: The 1 mana 2/2 statline was a really helpful tool here. Putting a coin on top of your deck felt both like an advantage since coins are good and a disadvantage because they can sometimes be useless. Giving the player no reward for doing this felt really sad, but at the same time making this minion overstated with a drawback didn't feel like a Rogue card. A 1 mana 2/2 is in that grey area where it's technically above average without actually seeming like you're having a negative effect for a stat bonus. Also, this art is content-aware filled as you can see on the head - I wonder how many people will notice.

Think Fast



Top-Down - I knew very quickly that I wanted to have a Rogue card called Think Fast since it played into the time theme and felt pretty fitting for Rogue.

Flavor: The Combo effect is optimized if you play the card in the same turn that you get it, which fits the “If you wait too long, you miss this opportunity” flavor that I was trying to go for without

being forced to use the “draw a card discard it at the end of your turn” mechanic that we’ve all seen time and time again.

Mechanics: Combo cards are pretty cool but sadly they don’t get too much love. Combo felt like a natural mechanic to tie into the “Think Fast” theme that has you play the card immediately after you get it, as well as being a large theme in the set.

Comments: Originally, the combo reduced the cost permanently, but then it was both less flavorful and more overpowered. I was reluctant to make it “This Turn” since it was one of the few simple cards in the set - fortunately, other cards were made simpler to open up space for this. This card’s art was also edited - I wanted to blur the picture to make her look like she was moving a bit quicker, but then it blurred her as well which felt weird. Instead, I copied the image and put it beneath her and blurred that, making it look like everything around her is blurred.

Desolation of K’aresh



Middle-Out - Legendary minions are usually designed with Middle-Out and Rifts are similar in status to legendaries so it makes sense to be used here too.

Flavor/Mechanics - As is typical of a Middle-Out card, the flavor and mechanics are inextricably linked, so I'll talk about them together:

The inhabitants of K'aresh are barely alive after their planet is annihilated (1 duration on the rift). They have to use their advanced technology (represented by combo, close enough) to survive (increase the duration of the rift). As a result of just barely surviving, they have been gifted with new powers (draw an extra card each turn). Had they done nothing, they would have died immediately (Rift does nothing without a combo effect to start it off). It's a more interesting way

to reward a combo-heavy deck than the previous design that just scales the effect by how many combos you've played throughout the game.

Comments - Originally, this card and the class legendary had their mechanics swapped. This card used to be a 0 mana 2 duration rift with "Battlecry: Destroy your minions. Deathrattle: Return them to your hand costing (2) less." The goal here was that it shadowstepped your whole board with a time delay, so that it wouldn't just faceroll in quest. It fit the flavor pretty well, planet annihilated but came back stronger. It got reworked partially because its effect overlapped too much with the new legendary effect, and partially because it didn't feel like a Rift and moreso was just a delayed effect.

Think Again!



Top-Down - After making Think Fast!, I immediately thought of as many ways to take advantage of that usage of the word "Think" relative to a time-themed expansion. Think Again worked in a similar vein.

Flavor - This ties into the loose theme of Time with the "Again" aspect, as in repeating the past. You must "Think Again" because you're returning a minion to your hand to be played again, and because there's another copy of the minion so you'll play it again, and because you'll be seeing two copies of the same thing which, were this not the crazy world of hearthstone, might provoke someone to think again.

Mechanics - Bounce Rogue is cool but it can be hard to design for since the bounce mechanic itself is generally worth almost nothing, thus skewing the cost of the card to be closer to (0). This

card generates value which justifies it costing more, while tying into the flavor well without being clunky.

Comments - With this card and some others, there is the concern as to whether quest rogue might become viable. I personally don't think so, but it's something to watch for. This card also had edited art - I duplicated the guy in the picture and made him transparent both because I wanted to make as many of the artworks use ethereals as I could, and because a google search for "fantasy clone art" and the like was getting me nowhere.

Time-Shifted Dagger



Bottom-Up - I wanted to make a viable rogue weapon. I mean, who doesn't.

Mechanics - Based on the success of Truesilver Champion and Death's Bite, it always felt to me like the best way to give a class a viable weapon is just to give them a 4 mana 4/2 weapon. Making this card a combo to become a 3 mana 4/2 instead of simply paying that extra mana was Rogue's spin on how to do that.

Flavor - The flavor of this card is currently very weak and I'd be surprised if it hasn't changed by the time this goes public. There's this loose connection of like "Yeah you pull this shiv out after the first one, which has both a time delay and a combo effect" but it's just super weak.

[Update]: The flavor has been updated post-writeup to Time-Shifted Dagger. I got this flavor by browsing through loot from the caverns of time and seeing this as a name for a dagger drop. As a general trend, instead of rewriting parts of my writeups, I'll just add update tags to rewrite the updated parts when a card is changed after the writeup is done.

Comments - I'm really happy with this card despite its bad flavor because it serves three purposes - gives rogue a viable weapon, is another Combo card that works in a unique way, and is very simple. One-line cards are awesome whenever you have the opportunity to make a cool one.

Ethereal Plunderer



Top-Down - At this stage in the Rogue set, I was pretty deeply committed to the Ethereal theme, and so at this point it was a question of how I could best utilize the small amount of art that was available. This comes from a TCG card called Ethereal Pillager so I figured I might as well make it an Ethereal Pillager.

Flavor - A Pillager by definition ransacks things and gets loot. This is exactly what this card does, and it's also exactly what Ethereals love to do.

Mechanics - I designed this card's effect by combining two simple effects. Originally, it dealt 1 damage, but the card felt weak combined with the fact that 2 damage was more aesthetically pleasing, so I buffed it.

Comments: Balance-wise, if we treat "Deal 2 damage" and "Draw a card" at roughly the same mana value, then we could look at this as a 4 mana 6 stat minion that draws a card with Combo: Deal 2 damage. Doing the math, this is like having SI:7 agent, but paying 1 mana to draw a card. I know that this type of formulaic logic doesn't necessarily produce accurate results since you can't determine the strength of a card purely by its mana value, but it's a good way to at least check that this card is within the "Margin of Reasonability."

Hit and Run



??? - This card actually came to me entirely in a flash while I was in the bathroom. I'm not sure which came first, flavor or mechanics.

Flavor/Mechanics - Since this card came all at once, we'll treat it like a Middle-Out and do flavor and mechanics at the same time:

Quite simply, you "Hit" to deal 5 damage and then "Run" by adding a shadowstep to your hand which helps your minions retreat. The sequence of event/cause and effect style card gives it some justification in the Time theme.

This is Rogue's card in the "Forgotten Cards" set. Shadowstep is one of my favorite cards of all time. While Shadowstep did/does actually see a decent amount of play, it's for all the wrong reasons - in quest rogue as just another card to complete the quest, in miracle for an OTK. I always saw shadowstep as a card that you use in the mythical "Bounce Control Deck" which runs high-value battlecries that you duplicate with shadowstep. Bounce is one of my favorite mechanics and shadowstep is one of the most satisfying cards related to that mechanic, so I felt like I absolutely had to have a way to bring it back. Like many of the other Forgotten cards, shadowstep has some potentially great value but isn't worth running because it's too often a dead card. By attaching it flavorfully to the "Deal 5 damage" effect, not only do we give the card a reasonable way to be run, it also slows down the bounce archetype as a whole to provide some contrast to the cancer aggro that was Quest Rogue.

Comments - Despite how shockingly simple this card is, it's one of my most well-received. In the /5 ratings for the First Pass, it was the only card that I gave myself a 5/5 for. It also got a 5/5 from everyone else, and was the only card ever in any of the /5 ratings to get a perfect score. This makes it a potential candidate for my 9 best.

Ethereal Swindler



Bottom-Up - I wanted a card to support Burgle rogue that got you a card from your opponent's class in a more interesting way than just "Discover a card from your opponent's class" or "Get a random card from your opponent's class."

Mechanics - I thought a cool way to accomplish this was to let the player use their opponent's class against them. What if the player had more agency than just getting a random card? Picking rarity seemed like the cleanest way to do that. What's cool about the design here is that the card could be fairly reliable without feeling like it'd be the same thing every game, since you have no control over what your opponent's class is.

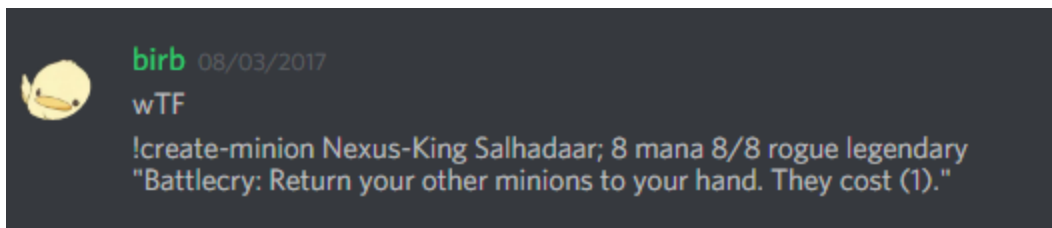
Flavor - Other than tying into the Ethereals theme, the flavor for this card is not the best. The only way I could think of it was it's an ethereal who knows the opponent better than they know themselves and uses that to play them - sort of the essence of a Swindler.

Comments - Someone brought up that the choice between 5 could be a tight squeeze on the mobile screen. As such you probably wouldn't be choosing between 5 token cards, but rather just choosing between the rarity gems of basic/common/rare/epic/legendary which saves a lot of space.

Nexus-King Salhadaar



Pre-Emptive Nostradamus Notice - I *promise* this card was made before Grumble. Here is my evidence, a screenshot of me conceptualizing this card for the first time on August 3rd using my bot. It was an 8 mana 8/8 originally but got changed to 7/7/7 before finalization (I have another screenshot for that but don't wanna clog up this page).



The reason that I'm keeping this card despite the fact that it's now extremely similar to a Blizzard card is that, well, I kinda want to take pride in my prediction. I've made some other exact predictions of Blizzard cards before (for example, Icebreaker revealed in KoFT) but because I never post my cards I can't reference a post on /r/customhearthstone to get a concrete demonstration that I think on the same wavelength as blizzard sometimes. This, and that I don't really have time to make a new Rogue legendary :/.

Bottom-Up - I know you're supposed to design legendaries top-down or middle-out. I am sorry. This one is bottom up because its design depended so much upon what Desolation of K'aresh's

effect would be, and K'aresh has a much tighter restriction on what effects are worth with its flavor.

Mechanics - As I said before, I love bounce, but I want bounce to get slowed down. A lot of the very best cards to get bounced cost a lot (vilespine/blade of c'thun) which means you get optimal value with cards like Shadowcaster that hard reduce the cost to (1). Shadowcaster shenanigans can be really fun and awesome and I wanted to double-down on the insanity of when you fill your board with a bunch of Shadowcasters and 1/1 copies of shadowcasters.

Flavor - Again, not the strongest, cause it's Bottom Up. Ethereals are pretty tricky, and vanishing all your other minions to come down at the perfect moment is also pretty tricky. Doing it to all friendly minions as opposed to just one is also pretty kingly.

Comments - This card used to be "Battlecry: Deal 1 damage to all enemies for each Combo you've played this game." I thought that it was sufficiently conditional enough for Rogue AoE, but then the set got a little less focused on Combo, and it also felt like a pretty boring thing to do with combo, and then K'aresh effect got swapped, so the card got reworked.

Priest: Album

Priest was the second class designed this expansion. It draws from a greater variety of flavor themes than rogue - does this make the class feel more diverse, or more disjoint? We will see.

In terms of gameplay themes, this set is slightly more narrow than Rogue. There are two main archetypes that we'll be supporting here: First, we have a relatively new archetype. It's a more aggressive, tempo-oriented deck that makes use of minions that buff each other and "Whenever a minion is healed" type effects. Secondly, we're giving Deathrattle priest some more love, both by printing more value-oriented Deathrattle minions and by giving priest two new cards that spawn 1/1 copies - which is both a really cool mechanic and one that pushes Deathrattle.

I'll also take this time to make a general comment on an aggressive priest archetype - based on the existence of cards like Mind Blast, Spawn of Shadows, Shadowbomber, Lightwarden, Holy Champion, etc... I don't think that an aggressive priest deck is entirely out of the question, or a poor fit for their identity. Turning priest into your typical aggro face rush class would definitely be a mistake, but with the correct execution I think that Priest can have a tempo/aggro deck that feels like it belongs in the class.

Borrowed Time



Top-Down - While searching for art for a completely unrelated card, I came across this image. Given how desperate I am for cards with Time flavor, it would be foolish not to use this opportunity. It came from a TCG card called Borrowed Time, so I decided to do the same.

Flavor - The basic idea behind Borrowed Time is the exchange of power now for power later, in either direction. It's usually taken to mean gaining power now in exchange for a large price later, however in the TCG, it has an effect which gives you an extra turn after charging up for a while, which is the opposite. I went on a route similar to the TCG where you give up power now in exchange for power later.

Mechanics - Something which I wanted to make sure I got right in creating this card was that both the drawback and the reward affect the same resource. For example, an earlier version had you draw cards at the cost of discarding some off the top of the deck. This version has an even better connection, increasing and then reducing the cost of your spells respectively. It opens up some pretty interesting combos, however, because you have to suffer an insane value loss from both running a 0-cost card *and* paying 2 extra mana for a spell, I think it's inconsistent enough to not be gamebreaking.

Comments - This card doesn't really fit into either of the Priest archetypes that I printed with this expansion. This is okay, mainly because not every card in your expansion is designed to push an archetype. Some give you general tools and others are generally fun, self-encapsulated cards. This one had so many potentially interesting interactions with previously existing priest cards that I felt like it worked.

Keeper of Balance



Bottom-Up - This is Priest's Forgotten card which is pretty much a guarantee that it's gonna be designed bottom-up.

Mechanics - I wanted the Forgotten cards to have some sort of differentiation to them, since it would feel *really* dry if there were just a bunch of cards that said "Battlecry: Add a Thing to your hand." So I had to think about what makes Circle of Healing special. Circle is cool because it gives a very powerful effect at a very low mana cost, at the condition of also affecting your opponent. Figuring out how to play this card such that it doesn't affect your opponent (trade first), or even better, setting up situations where you *want* your opponent to benefit from it (northshire cleric, etc), give this card the opportunity to do some cool things. The symmetrical nature of the card made giving a copy to your opponent as well feel very fitting.

Flavor - As you can tell from the mechanics paragraph the main feeling of the card is how it's symmetrical. Not only that but it's a symmetrical card that keeps the whole board at full health. For this I envisioned your typical person whose job it is to keep the peace - the first name that came to mind was Peacekeeper, but that's already taken in Aldor Peacekeeper, so I called it Keeper of Balance (since, unfortunately, "Balancekeeper" is not a word).

Comments - This card is a 1 mana 2/2 partially because it's a symmetrical effect and partially because the flavor of balance makes a symmetrical statline almost mandatory from an aesthetics perspective. A friend said that combined with shadow ascendant this card gives a decent shove to Zoo priest, something I'm not necessarily sad about.

Past Self



Middle-Out - I'm not really sure whether this card design counts as bottom up or middle out so I think that the lack of clarity makes it middle-out by definition. Basically the story of its design was pretty odd so I'll tell it over several sections.

Flavor - The story of this card starts in a spell called Deja Vu. I knew I wanted to make a card called Deja Vu, and based on the art I had available, it felt like it would fit best in priest.

Mechanics - Previously the second main archetype of this set was Steal priest instead of Deathrattle and 1/1 Priest, so it turned out as a card-stealing card which people really hated. We then tried to rework it around the flavor of Deja Vu. One of the designs that was suggested (credit to Phyley) was various iterations of interacting with the first minion played this game - adding a copy to your hand, summoning it, whether or not it included enemy minions, etc. We didn't really settle on anything.

Mechanics Again - A few days later, I was working on Priest Second Pass again and this card came up. At this point I knew that I wanted to make it a card that summoned a 1/1, and I realized that it solved a lot of problems we had with the "Summon the first minion you played this game" that we had come up with earlier. So I printed the card.

Flavor Again - But I had another card that also played into similar themes which could also use the name Deja Vu. I found that I could rename this card to the complement of a Warrior card I had just made called "You From the Future", so I called it "You From The Past" before shortening it to "Past Self." I had been thinking about the 1/1 Priest theme before I even started working on priest and how I could tie turning a minion into a 1/1 version of itself represents time travel back to childhood or infancy.

Comments - To be blunt, this card is not very good. It doesn't fit at all into big/cheat priest, and is mediocre in Deathrattle priest. But it makes you think - "how can I utilize this card?" Maybe you run a meme variant of the Deathrattle deck where your cheapest minion is a Devilsaur Egg. That type of thought-provoking aspect of a card is awesome, and if you make a card that produces this but doesn't fit snugly into an archetype, don't be afraid to explore it a little more.

Revitalizer



Bottom-Up - This was one of the first cards I ever designed for tempo priest. Restoring a minion to full health does interesting things in priest and it's also a very simple effect that grounds your set in reality.

Mechanics - If we want a healing-centric deck to work, then we're going to need efficient healing cards. To reiterate what I briefly said in the previous section, a full minion heal on a very nice body in priest is an effective and most importantly simple way to do that. Amidst all these weird cards that function differently it's nice to have a few familiar looking cards, as I said "grounds your set in reality."

Flavor - For this card I envisioned a healer that literally rewinds their patient, like Shining Diamond from JJBA. I resisted making a JoJo reference in the name, but you can bet your ass it's going to be in the flavor text. I chose the name **Revitalizer** to emphasize that you are returning them to a previous state, thus rewinding/time travel/etc.

Comments - I'll mostly talk about balance here. I've gotten a LOT of people telling me that this card should be a 2/2. I see the logic - restore to full health is pretty strong in priest, and this

minion takes no stat hit at all for it. I was comparing this to Hozen healer, a neutral minion which takes a .5 stat hit for the same effect. This is priest, though, home of what should be some of the strongest healing effects. Being .5 more efficient than a neutral minion on a class card, at a mana slot (2) where minions often have effects on top of a vanilla body seemed reasonable. If it pushes tempo priest, I think that's cool, and if it sees toxic levels of play because of the Auchenai combo, then 1 point of health isn't going to fix the card.

[Update]: This card has indeed been nerfed, but not by making it a 2/2. I asked people what their main concerns were with a card and a surprising number talked about how it was the potential combo with Auchenai Soulpriest. I knew that the Auchenai combo was existent but didn't expect it to be good - after discussing it, it was pretty obvious that it was indeed a good combo, like really good, and that the card obviously needed a nerf. There were two possible paths to nerf it: make the heal only targetable on friendly minions, or make the minion a 2/2 or even lower. One of them nerfs it as a general control tool for the destroy a minion combo, the other nerfs it in terms of general tempo and healing synergy. Based on the design of the card, it was pretty clear which two of the nerfing paths made more sense, and I restricted the heal to only friendly minions.

Birth of the Naaru



Bottom-Up - "A rift, designed with bottom-up? You must be ashamed!" Don't worry. I am ashamed.

Mechanics - One of the big issues with the "Whenever you heal a minion" effects is how unreliable they are to set up, and while I do see why you'd place a limiter on such insane

combos, it's what's holding the deck back. Making it a rift guarantees it'll survive at least a turn, ensuring that you'll get something big off. Making it summon Lightwardens allows for some pretty insane exponential value, but at the end of the day your board is gonna be a bunch of low-health minions so it doesn't irreversibly win you the game.

Flavor - The Birth of the beings which serve as the power source for literally all priests and paladins seemed like an important enough event. Originally this Rift was called "Rekindling the Sunwell", but Lightwardens are specifically tied to the Naaru.

Comments - I was wondering when this time would come, but for the first time ever, I actually have nothing more to say about this card. It's pretty straightforward without being too boring, especially for a rift.

Chrono Cavalry



Bottom-Up - This card comes from a very early brainstorm session of how I would go about creating interesting new tempo heal mechanics.

Mechanics - The question I was asking myself when designing this card was "What can you attach to a 'whenever a minion is healed condition'?" We already have gaining stats, drawing cards, and dealing random damage, which are some of the most common effects to put on a trigger such as this one. After a bit of thought, it hit me, and it was so shockingly simple - why not interact with the minion that gets healed, as opposed to just doing a generic triggered effect? The first two of these were "Whenever a minion is healed, give it +2/+2" and "Whenever a

minion is healed, it can attack again this turn.” The first one didn’t have enough space to make it into the set, and the second one felt better and less abusable on a single minion that affected itself.

Flavor - This is definitely not your typical priest card and so flavor didn’t come as easily as it does for some other cards. It essentially came about from asking “what’s a heavenly, priest-like entity that you might also reasonably see engaged in combat?” the image that came to mind was armor-clad angels. “Timeless” came from the idea of a heavenly force that intervenes in conflict time and time again throughout history, which reflects the repeated attack nature of the card.

[Update]: This card’s flavor was updated in one of the flavor update processes, finally. While we were all banging our heads against the wall looking for flavor, the inspiration came from an odd source. Someone misread this card’s original name as “Timeless Agent” and described how they thought it was pretty good flavor, a timewalker that goes back in time again and again until they finally get it right. This wasn’t the flavor I had in mind at all, but it gave me the idea of using some sort of timewalker affiliate that repeatedly goes back in time as the flavor. One idea that popped into my mind was using Tracer as the artwork, in the mini-theme of making crossovers with other Blizzard universes, but this was deemed a bit too direct. Regardless, along the process of finding a name for Tracer, I came up with the title of “Chrono Cavalry” which I thought sounded pretty cool, so once we decided against using Tracer I found a picture of what Chrono Cavalry would actually imply, namely someone riding a Bronze dragon into battle.

Comments - After some consideration from myself and other people listing their favorite cards from the set, **a version of this card with altered flavor is officially the card that I’ll be sending to Blizzard in my internship application!**

Deja Vu



Bottom-Up - I knew early on that this was going to be a card that produced 1/1 copies, so it's a bottom-up effect.

This card's sections are going to be so brief that I'm going to combine them all into one section.

Mechanics/Flavor/Comments - This card is actually based on a card with the same effect that I made for my Bard class a very long time ago called Song of Shadows. When I was reorienting the priest set to be about 1/1 copies, it seemed like a natural fit, and soon inherited the flavor of Déjà Vu as you can read about in its many flavor and mechanics sections. This card's name was revolving between Past Selves, Déjà Vu, and Song of Shadows, which led to some pretty big miscommunications in development.

Shadow of the Past



Bottom-Up - This card was actually created far out of the regular production cycle for priest. Towards the end of the Time set I was doing some prompt generator challenges for fun (a system I set up with a friend where you are given a large number of prompts in a short time and have to make several cards with certain types of effects very quickly). I believe the prompt was to make a Deathrattle minion of some sort, and I came up with this idea.

Mechanics - Originally I created this from the prompt generator challenge as a 4 mana 3/3 neutral, which was then buffed to a 3/4. However, upon revisiting priest flavor as I was looking to up the flavor of the set, I realized that there was a very similar card to this: a 6 mana 5/6 with poor flavor that added a copy of the card that killed it to your hand as a deathrattle. It has hidden rules in some edge cases which is always undesirable, it seemed like an awful card, and it had horrible flavor. I knew that this design had more potential for a time set tie-in, and so I replaced that one with this one, changing the stats to a 5 mana 6/4 to somewhat better fill the gap the other card left.

Flavor - Since this card's effect interacts with the last card that was played, as mentioned, it's pretty easy to link it with time-travel flavor. We do have some precedent for shades being card stealers, and the name Shadow of the Past would work with a shade. While it is a bit generic, since it so perfectly would link to both the card's effect and the expansion theme, so it would work. Too bad there isn't any unused art of shades -- what's this? A new piece of ancient shade fanart that's extremely high quality that I've never seen before? The card was instantly created.

Comments - The wording on this card is only semi-precedented. When you generate a card to give to your opponent, you "Give it to your opponent." When both players get a copy of a card, they are both "Given" spare parts. However, you can't use similar wording when only you are given a card - you can't say "Get a copy" or "Gain a copy," you have to say "Add a copy to your hand." However, this card looks so much better visually with this wording versus the copy to hand wording, since it overlaps to 4 lines and looks odd even with the best possible line breaks. There is some minor precedent in Curious Glimmerroot to say "Get a copy," though theirs was to stay within 4 lines while this one is to stay within 3. I think that, overall it makes the card much more attractive and is worth the extremely minor semi-inconsistency.

Alonsus Faol



Buckle Up, because this one is gonna be crazy long. There are so many aspects of this story all the way from mechanics to flavor, there's tons to write about. I'm expecting at least 2 pages just for this card. We'll see if I'm right.

Mechanical Comment: The artifact being played counts itself as an artifact, so the first artifact triggers once, the second one triggers twice, etc. If you revive this minion, the first artifact starts at 4 triggers, then 5, then 6, etc. After playing the first artifact, a counter will appear under the mana cost of all your artifacts from now on saying "+1" or "+2" to represent the number of previously played artifacts so you'll know how many extra triggers you get.

Middle-Out - As you'll see from the full design story, this one probably counts mostly as Bottom-Up with some exceptions... shame on me, but oh well.

Mechanics - The goal of this card was to create a nice legendary minion that pushes deathrattle priest without being literally *only* usable in deathrattle priest. If you want a card to be good in a certain archetype, step one is to play that deck and identify what that deck needs. I don't have the time (or the cards) to do this with every archetype, so as a substitution, I looked up people's thoughts on deathrattle priest in r/competitivehs. The main complaint was that quest completion would often win you the game versus aggro and midrange, but against control you just ran out of value pretty quick. So I knew that I wanted to give my card some really greedy value - this is a great fit for the type of playstyle that priest players enjoy (greedy value), as well as a path to make this card useful in more than just Deathrattle priest.

Here is where I got stuck. I had already been stuck on the priest legendary before coming up with the previous, scrapped iteration (one that dealt with playing stolen cards randomly), and at this point I had already spent a few hours with my forehead on my desk. At this point I decided to try some really crazy, out-there effects. We want value, and we want deathrattle synergy, so how about getting a token called a Shadow Fragment whenever a minion died this game?

But then there was the question of what shadow fragments did. Maybe discover a card or something like that? But then I realized that this mechanic rewarded you for swarming your board late-game, which runs contrary to how Deathrattle priest would want to play. Around this time we start getting into really weird effects, like gaining Shadow Fragments equal to the cost of friendly minion that died, storing them as a separate currency under your hero portrait like mana crystals, being able to spend them during your turn to buy powerful cards.. It was a remotely interesting concept, but it was WAY too complicated to fit within the realm of hearthstone, even with super vague Blizzard Wording™.

I went back to the shadow fragments idea. I wanted to play with something that maybe rewarded you for reviving the minion, so I looked at a stalagg/feugen-esque effect. Maybe you got two fragments, each of them reading "If you've already played the other fragment, do a thing" so you sort of got to choose which effect you wanted, but if you revived the minion you got both which would be insane value. The flaw that someone pointed out to me was that this was a

bit too similar to a reskinned “Choose One effect” and that maybe each of the tokens should do a small thing themselves.

It is here that I got the “Do something for each Thing you’ve played” to generate a sort of choice where you choose which effect you want the most of based on the order you play them. I tinkered around with a few different implementations, but I ran into trouble when I wanted to have something like damage which scales in increments of 1 mana (dealing 1 extra single-target damage is worth 1 more mana) and something like card draw which scales in increments of 2 mana (drawing an extra card is worth 2 mana).

For some reason I went back to thinking about the shadow fragments store idea before realizing I could scale the effects in increments of two. Finally I felt like after so many long hours I was onto something. I tinkered with a few different versions, would it be whenever a friendly minion died or just Alonsus’s Deathrattle, etc. before settling on an 8 mana minion that gave you all three as the deathrattle.

Flavor - Here is where I took a break from focusing on the mechanics to find flavor, since flavor would determine the specific effects of the tokens. I was so desperate for flavor and to be done with this card and this class that my only goal was to find literally anything vaguely related to priests that was related to having “Three Things.” I scrolled through the list of “Notable priests on the Wiki page to no avail.

As I was about to give up, something caught my eye: The three priest paths, their three specializations. This had some potential. I posted it in chat, and Nikko (the owner of hearthcards!) brought up that I could do something with the three Artifact Weapons for each of the respective specializations - exactly what I was looking at doing. I had some vague notion that artifact weapons were connected to class order halls and that I knew that Alonsus Faol was involved in Priest’s order hall.

So now I looked up the three legendary weapons, and to my delight their abilities fit into nearly exactly what I wanted each of the three artifacts to do. The Void Torrent from Xal’atath was reasonably close to dealing scaling damage, the effect of Light’s Wrath could be stretched to be card draw (It’s a book on a stick!), and Image of T’uure was an absolute MIRACLE since I wanted to have something that summoned minions but was doubtful I’d find anything related to summoning on a legendary Priest weapon.

Back to Mechanics - I wanted these artifacts to have effects that were *completely* dynamic. This means that not only would they be able to increase indefinitely as you played more artifacts, but they they didn’t have to have some ugly starting value, like “Deal 3 damage plus one for each artifact you’ve played.” Since each artifact costed 2 mana, I thought that each artifact should add roughly 2 mana of value. A little bit of math later, I was using the benchmark values that Artifact #1 should give a 1 mana effect, then #2 gives a 3 mana effect, #3 a 5 mana effect, and

so on. We have really good precedents on these mana values for summoning minions, dealing damage, and drawing cards, so this was really easy.

Later, I ended up changing a few of the effects so that the scaling was less insane when you popped one of these out early. Image of T'uure went from 3/3s to 2/2 (I don't know why I thought that 3/3s was fair, based on my model, it was obviously wrong. Probably some prolonged-design-delirium.) and Xal'atath changed from 2 damage to 3 damage to minions only, so that its scaling capped out at 5 mana value (since regardless of how many you play, deal 99 damage to a minion is worth roughly the same as assassinate). This meant that while the card could generate some ridiculous value when cheated out early, it wasn't *scary* value. 2/2s can be cleared relatively easily, drawing a bunch of cards doesn't impact the board (and drawing a bunch of cards multiple times quickly becomes something that harms you) and the value of destroying an enemy minion for 2 mana is weaker in the early game since the targets are smaller. This made it less valuable on an early game cheat while still a great value card overall (the gap in value between cheating this out and actually playing it was one of my main original concerns about designing the card). It also recieved an attack buff, and even though you get far more than 2 mana of value off the deathrattle (which is what you're paying with its poor stats), this is your reward for enduring the slowness of an 8 mana deathrattle.

Overall it ended up pretty cool, I think that getting to choose the relative strength of effects you want based on the current board state is a really awesome and fun effect that accomplishes the exact goal it set out to achieve.

Comments - So we've already been going on for the aforementioned two and a half pages, and the craziest (at least, as I remember it) part of this story is yet to come.

Let me set the stage: You wanted to be done designing priest cards two days ago. Instead, you've been stuck on this legendary for the past few hours. You finally have a potential breakthrough idea. But, it and its tokens require a total of five pieces of artwork. This card is super dependent on flavor. Without the proper art, you can't make this card. You're desperate to finish this card, and yet, you get the feeling that at the final stage of design, you're not going to be able to find art, and you'll get set back even further.

Let's start with Alonsus Faol. If I hadn't already gone through the effort to find art for him, I would have definitely been worried. The one piece of art that I'd found and used for Alonsus on a previous iteration was completely obscured from the front page of Google Images - instead, it was a loading screen artwork that you can only find by doing "see more" on one of the images, and it's impossible to remember which one of those you used. Luckily, I had my old iteration saved in my permanent gallery that I have because I have [Hearthcards Premium](#) so I picked up the art from there.

Alright, we've got the base minion. Now, for a picture of each of the three Priest artifacts.

If you look up “wow priest artifact weapon art” you’ll find two good-looking pictures of weapons amongst a bunch of in-game images. One of them is a book on a stick and the other one is a shadowy staff. But hang on a second, I saw the thumbnail for Light’s Wrath when I was looking up the weapon - it’s not a book on a stick! Darn, that picture must be of something else. If you look at the tags on the Shadowy staff, you’ll see things like “Shadow Priest artifact weapon.” I already knew that the Shadow Priest weapon was called Xal’atah - so I printed that token. At least I have one done.

I wanted to get a better picture of what T’uure looked like, so I looked up 3d models of the priest weapons. Hang on a second - Xal’atah is a dagger! This staff isn’t a real priest artifact weapon! And so suddenly I had gone from 1/3 to 0/3. Luckily, I discovered that Light’s Wrath is indeed a book on a stick, taking me back up to 1/3.

I turned to discord for help, and luckily, a user by the name of ThePixelDash was there to save me. He looked over the artifact weapons, and he gave me the idea of using art that merely approximated what they looked like. Unfortunately, Xal’atah is a really weird dagger - not much looks like it. But somehow, just lying around he had the picture of a very creepy dagger that bore some resemblance to Xal’atah - given how long this art search had been dragging on, it was absolutely within my standards of acceptability. We’re at 2/3, and only one weapon is left. Plus, now we have someone on our side.

We look at T’uure. It’s a blueish staff with a pretty distinctive design. I look through my various art sources and find two things that bear a distant resemblance to it. The one with the strongest resemblance has bad dimensions - but Pixel comes in and edits it into the correct shape. I was about to get my hopes up, but then Nikko returned from his heavenly perch to say “That art is so bad, I’d delete it if I saw it in the [hearthcards] gallery.” I was crushed - so close to victory! At this point, Pixel abandons me in my time of need for *sleep* of all things.

So now I’m back alone, looking for a piece of art which literally does not exist. I’m getting so desperate that the thought of using in-game art crosses my mind. And looking at one of those pictures of in-game art, I see a transmog of the staff that looks a lot darker than the original design. I guess that opens up more generic staves as being able to fit the bill for T’uure, we can just say it’s a transmog or something. Do I have any art of corrupted staves on hand?

Wait a second.

Think back to the beginning. The very first piece of artifact art. The shadowy staff that was called a priest artifact but isn’t actually one. What if that was just a transmog of T’uure the entire time? I load it up. I can faintly see the distinctive semi-circular ring of energy around the top section, a key feature in T’uure’s design! And wait a second, if a transmog is a color and shape change, then maybe I could reverse the process and get an authentic-looking picture of T’uure! I open it in paint.net, and with expert precision I randomly scrub the hue bar back and forth until

the staff turns blue. It works. I don't know how well it matches the original but who even cares at this point. It's a blue staff with a semicircle at the end, what more could you want?

But my tribulations were not over yet. I had forgotten that I also needed art for T'uure's token, Image of T'uure.

First I had to figure out what an Image of T'uure looked like - was it a ghost, or a duplicate of yourself, or a floating staff, or a N'aaru? It didn't say on any of the wikis and none of them had screenshots. So I watched youtube videos of players acquiring the staff - on **every single one**, instead of actually testing out their newfound powers, they would just go and upgrade the staff without using it. After looking through about 5 or 6 of these videos, I went to watch generic "Level 110 holy priest gameplay" in hopes that I'd catch a glimpse of one of the images. Somehow, through the complete clusterfuck that is a WoW raid, I spot a N'aaru hovering nearby the player's character.

After looking for art for N'aaru for Birth of the Naaru, I know that the only pictures of N'aaru that exist are either in-game images or really bad art. But I've made it so far, I can't give up! I resort to deviantart - no surprise, nothing there either. I continue to scroll down with abandon, thinking about what programs I could use that makes in-game art look real, or if I'd have to pay an artist to draw me something.

But, on Deviantart of all places, I stumble upon something. A WoW-themed custom MTG card which has a Naaru in the art. I literally couldn't believe my eyes. I cropped out his art and reverse searched it. Nothing registered for existing in a larger, higher-res size. But, one of the links led me to an obscure japanese site which had the art I was looking for. I made some minor edits and put it on the card.

I did it. I finished the card.

Okay so that was like four and a half pages, I'll see if I can find any way to shorten this. I guess I did warn them, so it should be okay.

Paladin: Album

Paladin's set is split between supporting four main archetypes: Token, Quest, Divine Shield, and Control. However, few of these cards only push a single one of these archetypes at once. While it can be argued that few of these archetypes are actually viable, many of these cards would fit into two of those hypothetical decks.

Paladin's set was the only one to have this really cool name during development to guide the flavor process: "The Endless March." This was because I doubted it would be possible to tie a bunch of paladin cards into a Time theme, and instead I could just tie them into this vague military/marching theme. However, as individual cards actually managed to have good flavor, this overarching theme wasn't as necessary anymore, and isn't such a huge part of the set.

Aspiring Paladin



Bottom-Up - This is Paladin's Forgotten Card, and as such it was made with Bottom-Up.

Mechanics - Right off the bat we have one of Paladin's best designs in my opinion, which it owes primarily to its striking simplicity. While this card does overlap with Ghastly Conjurer to some extent, I think that the fact that this minion has 0 base attack sort of serves as the condition for its effect. Rather than just being a minion that you play and get an unrelated card, it's like this minion sort of has two halves - first you play the body on turn one, then you buff it into a 3/2 with charge on turn 2. Or, you could save the attack buff, and instead use it on the ever-increasing pool of paladin cards that synergize with buffs. Not to mention you also get a free quest tick from doing this.

Flavor - The flavor of this card comes from the idea of a kid who wants to be a paladin in the future and is currently training to become stronger, like a lowly squire but starting from an even lower period in time. Casting blessing of might on him represents his training to become a reasonable soldier.

Comments - The art is actually a picture of Arthas as a kid, since it's the only paladin I knew off the top of my head whose story begins when they're a child (and thus is likely to have art of them as a child).

Final Stand



Middle-Out - It's sort of ambiguous whether or not this card was designed top-down or bottom-up.

Flavor/Mechanics - After scrapping the paladin card that used to go here, a 1 mana spell that gave a minion Flametongue Totem's effect, I had to find something else to take its place. I did have a well-received 1-mana paladin buff spell that I could use called Cover the Flanks!, but someone pointed out to me that it wasn't very flavorful with the time expansion. So I thought back through some really old designs for a neat paladin effect that could also be spun to have good flavor. Final Stand was an old design of mine, and the use of the word "Final" to imply end of a life/near death fit the minimum requirements for flavor, as well as having some nice synergy with other cards in the set (hand of protection for Tireless Crusader, triggers the "loses a divine shield" proc from KoFT, serves as removal with the two 1/1s from Nick of Time, etc).

Comments - This design is actually one of my oldest published designs, if not the oldest card ever. It was entered into Hearthpwn's second ever weekly design competition nearly two and a half years ago, at the cost of (0) mana and under the name Devotion. I bumped it up to (1) here since the old version was balanced along the lines of Hunter's Mark which then got nerfed to 1 mana, as well as to continue to synergize with Maraad.

Late Reinforcements



Middle-Out - This is one of the first cards I ever designed for the set, in that really early stage where you tend to make cards that have a very strong tie between flavor and mechanics (although you then end up throwing many of them out).

I'll talk about this card in three really brief back and forth sections.

Flavor - The idea of making a card based on reinforcements that will arrive in the future seemed like good flavor.

Mechanics - The only questions here were the cost, the number of Recruits summoned, and when exactly they were summoned. I settled on 2 for 4 pretty fast, as we've seen that it's a bit unreasonable to pay a bunch of mana for some tokens. Originally, this card summoned the recruits at the start of your next turn. However, the only thing this really gave you was a guaranteed buff target. This card wasn't supposed to necessarily synergize best with the buff archetype - more important for it to be good with tokens. So I shifted it to end of turn, to guarantee that you would be able to get a pretty huge amount of value on the "Whenever you summon a minion" triggers, like Knife Juggler, Steward of Darkshire, and the new Forever a Student card.

Comments - One of my main original goals for the paladin set was to have a lot of cards that synergized with the "Whenever you summon a minion" mechanic, since that type of effect does inherently suggest a relationship with time.

Forever a Student



Top-Down - This card was created in the Second Pass of the Paladin set. The one consistent factor of criticism of every card that got removed from the First Pass set was weak flavor, so I wanted to approach some cards top-down to ensure better flavor.

Flavor - The "student" mechanic had always been in the back of my mind for this set, since it both has natural synergy with the "Whenever you summon a minion" idea (learning from others), as well as potential tie-ins to time flavor since learning is something you do over time. I was considering whether I should make it a minion or a spell, but I decided on spell since only in this context could I use the phrase "Forever a Student" (unless I called the minion something bland like Eternal Student). I wasn't quite sure about the card, but it got pretty high praise on its flavor from the customhs discord, so I felt I had done it right.

Mechanics - Mechanics here are pretty obvious - synergy with summoning tokens. One of the main struggles I had in creating this type of synergy effects is that there is such a limited number of effects that you can have on this type of card and I had to find some way to differentiate the ones I made. A major theme in this set before First Pass was the idea of giving friendly minions buffs that weren't stat buffs, but rather effects, like Blessing of Wisdom. While most of the cards synergizing with that theme got removed, I decided to draw on it for this card. While stat increases whenever you summon a minion have already been done, giving that effect to any minion of your choice hasn't.

Comments: Two things I'll briefly mention here. One, this card is at 2 mana instead of 1 because it was designed at a point where this paladin set already had way too many 1-Cost cards.

Furthermore, not every card has to be super viable/good as we can see from desperate resistance (or whatever the correctly translated name of that card is). Two, the typography of this card was an absolute NIGHTMARE because the existence of quotes. They're treated just like any other character but because of their size and their relatively high position on the line they don't seem to take up that much space. If you create a card with this type of effect without manually adjusting it, it will look like the quotes awkwardly skew your card. I'm pretty sure I spent a solid 5-10 minutes just adding a leading space to one line and backspacing one off of another until I got something that looked nice and centered.

Tireless Crusader



Bottom-Up - This card was actually suggested by a friend, and I came up with the flavor for it. So while flavor was my main focus, the mechanics of this card were done first.

Mechanics - Simple "At the end of your turn" effects are a great way to both create simple, synergistic cards as well as increase flavor with the Time concept. This card works excellently into the "Whenever a minion loses divine shield" archetype from KoFT, and is based on a prediction I had about the paladin set in KoFT that "Blizzard would absolutely print a Scarlet Crusader powercreep card because a good Divine Shield 3-drop is the only thing holding the Divine Shield deck back." I was wrong about this prediction, but it expresses my point: This type of effect may do more than you think to push the seemingly silly new Divine Shield archetype.

Flavor - Somewhat similar to Timeless Angel, I wanted to capture the idea of a warrior who can keep fighting again and again, playing off of the nature of the constantly regenerating Divine Shield. Given the statline and effect, I also wanted to tie it into Scarlet Crusader given the statline, effect, and inspiration. So by now it was pretty much down to choosing between "Timeless Crusader" and "Tireless Crusader", and as you can see, I went with the latter.

Comments - *Technically* this card isn't a powercreep on Scarlet crusader because you can't immediately buff it with Rallying Blade. To be fair though, it is stronger than scarlet crusader, but Scarlet is pretty weak, and this card is in a class which is supposed to have the very best Divine Shield cards.

Culling of Stratholme



Top-Down - I immediately knew that I'd be doing this event for the Paladin Rift, since it's actually one of the literally existing Rifts that you can do in WoW in the Caverns of Time.

Flavor - Arthas is (was) a famous Paladin and Culling of Stratholme is one of the most famous events in WoW (Glad you could bake it, Uther). There was really no question that I'd be doing this, the only thing I had to figure out was the mechanics of the card.

Mechanics - A card based on the Culling of Stratholme needs to encompass the key elements of the Culling: The sudden need to completely purge a town, regardless of whether or not the people were innocent. The first iteration of this card was pretty much a symmetrical Cult Master, which read "Whenever a minion dies, its owner draws a card." Now while this encompassed slaughtering the innocents (friendlies), it felt odd since you were suddenly not inclined to use AoE spells, since you were *afraid* of killing your opponent's minions. This seemed kind of silly for the Culling, so I made it draw cards for any player that kills the minions. The reason I then extended the duration to three turns for such a powerful effect was to ensure that your opponent got the opportunity to then kill your minions when they had the initiative, so it wasn't just a completely one-sided draw engine.

Comments - I think this type of rift is really cool, one that is symmetrical but certain decks can gear up to make more use of than their opponents. Making cards that your opponent can also interact with, surprise surprise, makes the game more fun for both players.

Vindicator Maraad



Top-Down - Technically, I did create the flavor of this card first. However the flavor and mechanics for this card mostly came about separately, so saying Top-Down is kind of cheating.

Flavor - I've seen all the "Warlords" promo videos for Warlords of Draenor, and Maraad is a big player in all of them. Given that WoD is the time-travel expansion, and Maraad is pretty important in WoD, it made sense that Maraad would be the time set legendary for paladin. While the mechanics for this card weren't tailor made to represent Maraad, just by his name of Vindicator and status as a Paladin you know that he is sort of a voice and protector of the weak, so his 1-drop focused effect does fit this flavor to some extent.

Mechanics - From seeing gameplay of quest Paladin, the versions of the deck that can complete the quest most efficiently are the ones that run several extremely cheap spells. The obvious flaw here is that this deck runs out of cards far too quickly, and that draw spells like Divine Favor aren't reliable enough. I've always been a fan of Quest Support cards that generate value like Primafin Champion, so this card was designed with the same buff cycling mechanics in mind. The final result has several uses outside of quest, though - you can run it in an ultra-aggressive Paladin deck that uses mostly 1-Cost cards to flood the board even if your hand is empty, or you could even run it in a more aggro-slanted midrange deck to clear out all the 1-Cost cards from your deck.

Comments - This card may be weak. Previously it drew a card for each 1-Cost card you played, but this was deemed both too powerful and too similar to Gadgetzan. I may consider buffing the effect, or at least buffing the stats.

Judgement Day



Top-Down - About halfway through First Pass, I realized that all of my paladin cards were really heavily leaning towards aggro and that I should mix some control cards in. I thought about what control cards you could theme on Time, and “Judgement Day” immediately game to mind.

Flavor - I had a lot of trouble on this top-down design, as top-down designs are usually a big struggle for me. After trying and failing to come up with interesting mechanics, I went back to the flavor drawing board to really get a sense of what a Judgement Day card meant. I came up with three possible interpretations of the flavor:

- Judgement Day referring to the inevitable end of the world at some fixed but unknown date in the future.
- Judgement Day referring to the apocalypse that wipes out all life caused by an angry god.
- Judgement Day referring to the day where a god brings swift and immediate justice, punishing evildoers and blessing the pure.

Mechanics - With these three possible paths in mind, I tried experimenting with each of them. The very first version of this card went down Path #3, and was something like, 7 mana spell, deal 99 damage to all minions. The shock value of “99 damage to a minion” is pretty impressive

and captures the unfathomable power of a god. The idea behind this version was that your divine shield minions would live more or less unscathed while the unworthy non-divine shield minions would die. It received negative reviews, since the divine-shield interaction is not really big enough to differentiate this card from Twisting Nether, which is understandable.

The next version I tried was going down path #1, the “inevitable end.” Naturally, the way to accomplish this sort of “Countdown to doomsday” is to have the card be required to sit in your hand for a while before it can be used. So the first version of this was an AoE spell that reduced its cost each turn. It felt pretty boring, there wasn’t all that much strategy in how you use the card other than “Wait until it’s good and then play it.” So we tried a close relative of this effect, the damage increment per turn, which you can see in this iteration. That way, you have to make interesting choices as to when you play this card based on the health of minions that you know are in your deck, so that you can get the optimal scenario where you don’t destroy your valuable minions.

Comments - I want to use this section to point out how I worded the card. I could have said “Deal 1 damage to all minions for each turn this spent in your hand,” which is arguably a cleaner way to word the same effect. The issue here is that there’s no convenient way on the card to now display how much damage it will actually do. In the version I went with, it’s feasible to have the total damage displayed in the first sentence, and change on the card, kind of like how it works with Spell Damage. Forcing your players to keep track of this, or having to design an entirely new indicator just for this card would both be pretty unreasonable, being able to have a clear damage indicator was the deciding factor in this card’s wording.

Nick of Time



Top-Down - I was planning to have a minion called Nick of Time from very early on. In fact, right after deciding on a time expansion I preemptively wrote a bunch of common expressions with the word "Time" in them to use as flavor, and that's where Nick of Time came from.

Flavor - I already sort of explained how I came up with Nick of Time. Selecting the art for this card was interesting, since what aspect of "Nick of Time" could you reflect in the art without finding a picture of a Time-themed Knight? I figured that the pun-aspect meant that the art should have a more whimsical and lighter theme than your typical Paladin, and I knew I had seen this art of a smiling paladin with a lit background somewhere before.

Mechanics - This stage was interesting. I had previously been both thinking about creating a card called Nick of Time and thinking about creating a Paladin minion that summoned two 1/1 Silver hand recruits when you drew it. I had even gone as far as thinking that Nick of Time should have an effect when you drew it, and yet, I somehow *never connected the two* until someone suggested that I have Nick of Time summon tokens when drawn. The main struggle I was having with Nick of Time was that it seemed like best for flavor if he did something when you drew it, yet due to the swingy rng nature of the mechanic, most potential effects seemed unfair/unfun when attached to this condition. While summoning two Recruits doesn't have as much of a direct "I saved you in the Nick of Time" feeling, it's a very non-intrusive effect that fits the flavor of the card.

Comments - The reason I like an effect like this is because it gives you some 100% free value to help fight early game decks without being a card like Patches that gets run in aggro. This is because you really need to make full use of the card for it to be worth running, and only a midrange or control deck will be able to make use of a 7 mana 6/6 with Divine Shield. It also much push a Control Paladin deck that doesn't run any Murlocs, and while I'm not as opposed to the Murloc Midrange archetype as some people are, I do agree that there should be an alternative that doesn't involve Murlocs. This card might be a step towards that alternative.

Druid: Album

Somewhat contrary to my expectations, Druid received the highest initial ratings out of any of my sets. Ratings so high that, technically, none of them were under the rework bar - theoretically, I would have been able to finalize the set after only the First Pass. However, many of the cards were somewhat lacking in flavor, so I did end up spending a great deal of time trying to improve them by some degree.

We'll see if the lack of a real Second Pass here means that the mechanics were truly good, or if they end up being unrefined.

Accelerated Growth



Top-Down - This was one of the first five cards made for Caverns of Time and one of the few from that batch to stay in the set. Being created so early on, flavor was the main concern.

Flavor - The very first ideas I had for time-based flavor were the sort of “leap forward in time” concepts. I wanted to make a card that captured that, which wasn’t as problematic as “skip a turn.”

Mechanics - The mechanics of this card are pretty simple - do the two things that happen at the start of each turn: increment mana and draw a card, but do it to each player for balance and so that it better reflects time acceleration flavor since time often affects everyone.

Comments - I want to take time on this card to point out something nice: Symmetrical effects of this type, even if they are simple, can make the game dramatically more fun for both players. Cards like naturalize which have a huge impact but give your opponent more things to do can significantly lessen the impact of them losing their favorite minion. In the current state of Hearthstone, mana ramping is starting to become an action that evokes an “Oh god, not this again” feeling from the opponent, but giving them the benefit of a mana crystal and a card can help make that not feel so bad.

Mark of the Future



Bottom-Up - Buffing the next minion you play is a theme I wanted to explore in Druid as a sort of mana banking alternative to mana ramping.

Mechanics - I'll use this section to talk about balance since I've already said the little I need to say about how I came up with the mechanics. This card seems to have a relatively equal number of advantages and disadvantages compared to MotW, so I put it at an equal mana cost.

Advantages:

- This card doesn't require you to have a minion on the board, which is one of the main drawbacks to buff spells.
- You can use this to "Bank" mana, using 2 mana on a turn where you wouldn't have spent it anyway to get extra value on a turn where you do need it.

Disadvantages:

- One of the main strengths of buff cards in general is the ability to buff a minion and then immediately attack with it, serving as a pseudo-charge.
- In order to play this card on curve, you have to give up your turn 2. Letting your opponent get this free turn often means they'll be able to deal with your buffed target before you can attack with it.

Comments - What I really like about this card (and what's somewhat scary about it) is that it works great with so many of the awesome gigantic Druid legendaries that are too slow to be practical. I think this card might single-handedly make Hadronox viable and lead to a super duper greedy Druid deck where you run Hadronox, the large taunt minions like Ancient of War and Ironbark Protector, and N'zoth.

Oasis Spirit



Bottom-Up - Forgotten card. Bottom up. Nothing new.

Mechanics - When I came to creating the Forgotten card for Druid I realized I was in a bit of trouble. The two obvious card choices that fit the bill exactly for “high synergy but useless otherwise” are Moonfire and Savagery. However, I hadn’t built *any* of the other cards in my set around Spell Damage nor Attack buffs to your hero. So I decided I’d have to find another card with fringe use that didn’t see play. The best match was Naturalize, and while I was at first skeptical as to whether or not it would make a good forgotten card, I am really happy with the result.

Once I had chosen naturalize, I then had to choose the kind of trigger it would have. After thinking through various aspects of naturalize, I stepped back and asked myself, “What’s the most Druid-y way to do something?” The answer was, of course, Druid’s unique trigger mechanic: Choose One. So I went to see if I could work the card into a Choose One effect.

Now naturalize reminds me a lot of an old favorite card design of mine which never got printed due to balance issues. It was a rogue card called Shady Business - a 0 mana spell which gave one player three coins and had the other one draw two cards, but you got to choose which player got which. I loved the idea of this sort of equivalent exchange where you’d do the deal a different way depending on your deck and the situation. Naturalize functions in a somewhat similar way to this card, where you give one player one benefit (destroy a minion) in return for giving the other player a different benefit (draw 2 cards).

The only thing missing between this and Shady Deal is that you couldn't turn it around, let your opponent destroy one of your minions so you can draw 2 cards. But I had a choose one, so I could simply implement it in a way that lets the player do exactly that. In its current state, you might take the naturalize for yourself in a jade Druid deck, where you want to have a removal option just in case but you don't want to run such an unreliable card all on its own. You might give your opponent the naturalize in a token deck where you know they won't get huge value from it, leading you to eventually draw three cards. But in both of these scenarios, you could still find yourself taking the opposite choice if the situation demands it. Need to topdeck an answer in jade? Give your opponent the naturalize. Need to clear a big taunt in token? Give yourself the naturalize.

Flavor - This was a huge struggle for this card. Originally it was called "Young Naturalist" to play on the naturalize generation aspect and a hint at time flavor. I solved this by really looking at what the card did (generate lots of cards potentially for both players), what sort of flavor those actions have (symmetrical card draw can be seen as abundance/growth), and then building the minion as an entity that provides that thing (spirit of plenty playing into the "benevolent spirit that ensures you'll have a good harvest" trope).

[Update]: A friend whose balance opinions I trust said that this card would be absolutely insane in token druid, since you can throw naturalize at your opponent with little to no drawback except giving them an easy out for Bittertide Hydra, to get a 3 mana 3/4 that draws a card. I agreed that this was a little too good and decided to nerf it, but put off remaking the card for a long time. When I finally came back around to it, I felt like as might as well revamp the flavor along with a handful of other cards. I asked the Discord if they had any thoughts, and Pixel actually was actively trying to convince me not to change the card, that not all cards had to be flavorful, etc. I kept trying to say that, certainly we should at least try to get better flavor, there might be something, and he suggested an Oasis Spirit since that's sort of the Desert equivalent of the Spirit of Plenty. I liked that and it even had a cool underlying Choose One of, "Oasis or Mirage?" which worked really well with the reality-bending nature of the set. Pixel then so helpfully gave me the beautiful art for this card, edited together from two images by himself.

Comments - If you try to type this card into hearthcards, you'll notice that its effect slightly overlaps with the attack and health symbols. There are two solutions to this:

- 1) Use linebreaks. This makes the card 4 lines long (ew).
- 2) Give the minion a tribe to push the effect text upward and above the attack and health globes. Believe it or not this is actually something that I have done on many occasions - giving minions a tribe for the sole purpose of not having the text overlap. **[Update]:** Since the card's flavor changed, it's now an Elemental, so I got to use this trick and skip all the editing.

However, for this card, I took a third approach - Through some really, really, *really* rough paint.net editing, I got a screenshot of the effect text when it wasn't overlapping the attack and health globes, put that on top of a blank 3 mana 3/4 and slightly shrank and adjusted it so it didn't overlap, then got a regularly-sized watermark and put it behind the effect text and erased

around the effect text so it would show through. Basically, this card is actually a composite of four images, and if you zoom in you can probably see all the imperfections.

The Emerald Dream



Middle-Out - As rifts should be, want to make sure that The Emerald Dream is accurately represented.

Flavor/Mechanics - I'm not going to lie, this card is not my best work. I spent hours trying to come up with an effect that seemed fitting of the Emerald Dream flavor without using Dream Cards (to prevent Ysera from being sad) or Beast synergy (Since Beast Druid is kind of a dead archetype, and tribal synergy on rifts doesn't play out very well). I was literally just digging through past cards that I'd made or tried to make with interesting mechanics, and I remembered Captain Cookie, a card design that never made it through which was a legendary neutral murloc with this same ability. This ability is dangerous which is why cookie had issues, but putting it on a rift was a decent solution to this problem.

It's not all bad though. The flavor works nicely as a representation of the unchecked rampant growth of nature that would occur had intelligent life never touched Azeroth (which is the main principle of the Dream). The mechanics are interactive for both players, and no one strategy with this card is objectively the best. It requires you to think about the order in which you play your cards, how you can set up your minions for trades, whether or not you want to stack all your power onto one big guy or disperse it among your other, smaller minions.

Comments - Some older versions of this card. One read “All minions cost (1). Deathrattle: Return all minions to their owner’s hand.” to capture the feeling of Dreams where things don’t really obey the laws of reality and then everything literally vanishes when you wake up. The issue here was that it allowed for a Malygos combo. So then I tried another version without the Vanish Deathrattle that made both Heroes immune, but then this card suddenly shifted the entire game to be solely around it and instantly killed any aggro decks. Another janky one was one that let you play minions from your deck, and despite all the UI issues it made the game too consistent.

Sage of Foursight



Bottom-Up - As said previously, I wanted to toy with Druid cards that buffed the next minion you played.

Mechanics - Ever since I made my Bard class, I was fascinated with the type of cards that turn your small early game minions into decent late-game threats. This effect is particularly welcome in a set focused on ramp, where you want to run early game minions to not die immediately and to kick off your ramping, but are sad when you draw those tiny guys on turn 10 instead of your gigantic legendaries. I also liked the idea of further buffing medium-sized minions into full-on giants. Increasing Cost along with stats is the natural way to do this.

Flavor - The name “Foursight” was made by Phyley and everyone immediately loved it. It fits perfectly - It both plays into the fact that there are a total of seven 4s on the card (not including the name) and the fact that this card affects minions you play in the future (foresight). Originally it was called Druid of Foursight, but since this wasn’t your typical Druid of the Claw choose one transform, we had to rename it. There was some back and forth but eventually we settled on Sage.

Comments - I actually specifically looked for a picture of a Druid with some sort of formless magical energy in the picture, so that I could subtly edit in a “4.” For those who were confused when I said there were seven 4’s on the card not including the name, look in the tauren’s hands in the art.

Doomsday Attendant



Bottom-Up - This card was inspired by a mechanic that I helped a friend create. His was called Envision and allowed you to choose between drawing a card of type x from your deck, adding a random card of type x to your hand, or reducing the cost of a card of type x by 2. It was a bit complex but I felt like it had potential, so I took it and turned it into this card.

Mechanics - The two most important things to consider when making a Choose One effect are:
a) That the choices are easily comparable to each other. The two possible choices should play with roughly the same type of resource - for Druid of the Claw, attack is easily comparable to health. For Ancient of Lore, drawing cards and restoring health are in a similar vein. For this card, Drawing a 10-Cost minion and Discovering one are incredibly well-linked: You end up with a 10-Cost minion in your hand either way.

b) That one choice isn't strictly better than the other. If your Choose One is built such that you would always or almost always choose one particular option, then it isn't really a choice as it should be. For this card, there's a compelling reason for you to do either one of these two things. You use the draw a 10 mana card in decks where you have an important, synergistic 10-cost minion, like C'thun or N'zoth, and want to be certain you get it on time. You use the

discover when you are looking for raw value and don't really care what you get, or when you want to run a risk to maybe get a second C'thun.

Flavor - Another one I struggled a lot with. The solution - subtle puns. I made sure to find a word that contained the word "Ten" to hint at the 10-Cost minion. The two in consideration were Tender and Attendant, Attendant chosen because the minion should feel like it is subservient to a higher power. Someone else suggested that it be themed off of Doomsday, so I gave it its current name.

Comments - Coincidentally, the person whose mechanic inspired me to make this card is the same person that suggested I theme this minion after Doomsday, even though the original creation of this card and then the flavor revision happened weeks apart. Thanks, maysick.

Aging Treant



Bottom-Up - I had a very specific goal in mind when making this card: "I want a 6-cost minion with Taunt, and maybe a deathrattle." This is to synergize with the new Hadronox archetype, and *maybe* N'zoth (though the final design does not have any N'zoth synergy).

Mechanics - Ever since I printed Festering Belcher in my ICC set (4 mana 3/5, whenever this minion survives damage, it gains "Deathrattle: Summon a 1/1 Ooze") I thought the idea of building up deathrattles through repeated triggers was really cool. This is the time expansion so end of turn felt best here. The only question was whether it would be one sapling or two, and I decided on two because the minion will probably die very fast given that it has taunt, and summoning one 1/1 as a deathrattle is pretty underwhelming for a 6-cost minion.

Flavor - I told myself, I want to tell a story with this card's flavor. Normally, these are things every designer tells themselves, but it's really hard to tell a story on a paltry common. But, I got something that worked. Time naturally ties into age, and since I already had an end-of turn effect, aging naturally made sense. But this story is wholesome, and represents nature's cycle of life. When old things die in nature, they are never truly gone - they grow into new, smaller things, just as this aging tree turns back into several saplings when it dies.

Comments - It's possible that I change the wording of this card to something like "Deathrattle: Summon a 1/1 Sapling for each turn this survived" to give it N'zoth synergy, but that effect is harder to intuitively understand, so probably not.

Awaken The Ancients



Mechanics - Playing big minions is really fun, it's the source of the entire Timmy player archetype. The issue is that it takes too long. By making awaken the ancients, you get to experience that joy faster, as well as providing a card with pretty big shock value (Reducing a cost all the way to (0) is pretty crazy!)

Flavor - Really big things tend to also be really old, so I used this to tie into my Time theme. Waking up the giant guardian from its long slumber is a nice fantasy trope that I can play into.

Comments - In its current 6-cost state, this card is potentially OP. I designed this card thinking, the only really insane combos with this are when you chain it together with a bunch of innervates, but that requires you to draw perfectly and hardly ever happens. Even when it does

happen, it's similar to when you have a gigantic VanCleave - it can potentially win you the game, but if your opponent overcomes this threat, you're out of steam and will probably lose.

However, I gave this to some other people to playtest it. They were really eager to put the card to use (which is a good sign to see that people like the card). I kept getting reports like "Oh my god he double innervated into giant's wake (the old name of the card) into tyrantus AGAIN." I'm not sure if I was getting biased data but I was surprised how frequently the combo happened, and how the player on the receiving end never had any way to deal with it. When I get around to testing this personally, I may nerf it, or rework and replace it entirely.

Freya



Middle-Out - It's a legendary, and I used middle-out. Hooray!

Flavor/Mechanics - Earlier on in the design of this set, I was creating a card that synergized with a spell-only deck, and in thinking about what ultra-powerful magic entities there were that made sense to bear that effect, Nordrassil came to mind. That idea eventually got scrapped, but using Nordrassil as a minion stuck in my mind.

When I was making the Druid legendary, I knew I wanted to make a Timmy card. Something like The Ancient One that was really slow and hard to pull off but gave you that insane value if you could do it. Once again I had to think about super powerful nature-related entities, and I remembered Nordrassil from before.

Now when I thought about what was so special about big gigantic magic trees, it's that they grow. This tied naturally into the way I could give this card a condition, by requiring you to pull off something in order to grow the tree.

At this point, Nordrassil itself was still the legendary, with the effect "Battlecry: Go Dormant. Spend 20 mana on minions to awaken this." Since there was no room to have an actual effect other than the summoning condition, Nordrassil itself was just a giant minion with Taunt and Can't Attack. I got feedback here, people said that the mechanic/condition was okay but the reward was boring and polarizing. So I used the idea of having a card generate Nordrassil as a token, which would allow it to have a more interesting effect.

The first version of Freya was like the one you see here, but with the 20 mana condition instead of 40 stats, and the tree itself was a **20/20 that gave a +20/+20 buff**. I knew that it would probably get nerfed from this version, but I wanted to make it clear that I wanted to design a card with absolutely gigantic numbers to really give timmy players a kick.

From there, it was just minor adjustments - Changing it to on play instead of on summon so that it forced you to be more clever than "Just use Jade," changing it to 40 stats instead of 20 mana to avoid the anti synergy with the Quest and Awaken the Ancients, and nerfing the tree down to a 10/10 with a +10/+10 buff.

Comments - Technically, Freya did not plant Nordrassil. She planted G'hanir, whose seeds grew into Nordrassil. Since the real planter of Nordrassil was alexstrasza, and it felt really stupid to make an alternate alexstrasza as the Druid legendary (Alexstrasza the Gardener), we decided to overlook this and just say she planted Nordrassil.

Warlock: Album

Designing this set was a struggle for simplicity. As I might have already said, I don't give non-legendary rarity *too* much attention until the end of the design process. Most of the time, it turns out fine since you can make a common card rare or a rare card epic without much friction. However, in this set it really was a problem. When I had finished my First Pass (which I decided to specially name the Zeroth pass since it was so clear that it needed a massive overhaul) I had two commons, a rare, and five epics. There wasn't a *single* card that was less than three lines long. There were too many of the "complex but interesting" type of card. They had cool mechanics but were very clunky, and they were all intertwined so it was very difficult for me to figure out which ones I should remove.

With relentless use of community feedback, I tore down a bunch of cards including one of my favorite designs of all time, and then filled the rest of the set in with much simpler cards. Overall, I think it turned out nicely.

Running on Empty



Bottom-Up - I knew that I wanted Dimensius to be a discard-based legendary. I also knew that I didn't want to focus too much of the set on discard. So I decided to create a single other discard card, which is this card.

Mechanics - Inspired by a friend's card suggestion, sometimes combining two simple effects that have never been on the same card can lead to some really interesting yet simple cards. With my set in desperate need of simple cards, I decided to try this out, flipping through the game's mechanics to see what simple effect might fit on discard. A single target buff worked quite nicely, and this card could serve as a tool in zoo to help them trade up, as is the goal of the deck.

Flavor - A 0 mana card that discards a card will empty your hand extremely quickly, so the sense of "Being energized (buff) despite having no energy left (cards in hand)." Running on Empty is an idiom that accomplishes this, and using idioms for names is always great when you can do it.

Comments - In order to explore the idea of "Combinations of two existing simple effects," I actually tried creating a spreadsheet containing all the simple effects in hearthstone and randomly selecting two of them to see if they had potential as a card. This was not the method I used that came up with this card, but I might try to do something with it in the future.

Ashes to Ashes



Bottom-Up - This card idea was also reused from my Death Knight class, so I only had to find fitting flavor for it.

Mechanics - I decided to recreate this card's mechanics for two reasons. One, I needed a simple card and I knew that this one would be both simple and interesting. Two, I wanted to make something that synergized with self-damage warlock. This is an excellent fit for both of those goals and it has the extra benefit of giving warlock more viable early removal for a chance of seeing a good control warlock deck again.

Flavor - Originally I had planned to name this card Shared Fate for obvious reasons. Along the process of finding art, I saw a lot of art of Conflagration Warlocks and that inspired the name Ashes to Ashes, which sounded much more appropriate.

Comments - Nothing much to say here, except that I really love the simplicity of this card.

Vile Temptress



Bottom-Up - I had two things that I wanted to accomplish with this card. First, create a minion that synergized with self-damage, as well as maybe a card that synergized with the sacrifice mechanic. Second, I also wanted to make sure that there was a 2-Cost demon, since even though there is already a 2-Cost demon in classic, I wanted to make sure that life tapping with The Dark Portal Opens had some sort of variation to it.

Mechanics - This card is a slight variation from a scrapped card in my DK concept. I liked the idea of dealing damage to a friendly character of your choice, and having different situations where hitting your hero or hitting a friendly minion are useful. The issue with this design is that there was almost never a good reason to use this on a friendly minion, unless the card was very extreme and dealt a ton of damage.

The change here was adding lifesteal to the damage dealt, and giving the minion vanilla stats. This keeps all the interesting choices between using the damage on your hero and a friendly minion, but turns this card into a healing option for warlock. If you're able to sacrifice a friendly minion, not only do you get sacrifice synergy but you also get a decent heal. Otherwise, you target your face to trigger any self-damage synergies and get a 2 mana 2/3 with lifesteal.

Flavor - Based on Mistress of Pain, there's a small theme that Lifesteal demons should be succubi. So I named this Vile Temptress, one of the many names for Succubi in WoW.

Comments - In its current state, it might still not be rewarding enough for use on a friendly minion. But this can always be solved by increasing the damage amount, since it doesn't affect the card in the "use on hero" case but makes it better in the "use on minion" case (usually).

Tome of Ancient Evil



Bottom-Up - It's warlock's forgotten card. This is a very different take on what it means to be a Forgotten card. Power Overwhelming isn't weak - it'd probably see play in almost every warlock deck if it were allowed in standard. Power Overwhelming is a fun card to use, balancing the stat bonus and burst damage with having to destroy a friendly minion - it's one of the very first sacrifice cards. What wasn't fun, though, was getting two of these played against you on top of a Doomguard or a cost-reduced Leeroy Jenkins and losing the game out of nowhere.

Power Overwhelming checks all the boxes - it's a potentially fun card that doesn't see play anymore. If we can bring it back in a healthy and fair way, then we've created a good Forgotten card.

Mechanics - I came up with the idea of generating Warlock's forgotten card through an egg by thinking about what condition would be meaningful in the deck I was aiming this forgotten card at. With all the sacrifice synergy in the set, making a card that synergizes with sacrifices seemed natural, and of course the best way to make a sacrifice synergy card is to make more eggs.

This card might be slightly overcosted at 2 mana, but I think it's better to stay on the safe side.

Flavor - For this card's flavor I wanted to capture the trope of the "Powerful object that's been sealed away because it's cursed." For example, the feeling when Arthas takes Frostmourne, ignoring all the warnings that say he will be cursed. It tells the exact story of Power Overwhelming, after all. Not only could you imagine Power Overwhelming being sealed away because it destroys whoever uses it, but *it actually was* sealed away by blizzard when it rotated into hall of fame. Now you, the player, ignore the warnings as you break Power Overwhelming free from its prison.

The only question was what art and name to use to best convey this feeling. I was looking for something like a cursed chest or an inscribed lockbox with no luck. This locked tome was the first thing I found, so I decided to use it and named it accordingly (This was Cabalist's Tome's Original name). I wasn't sure if it made sense for a book to be a minion, but then I remembered Babbling Book.

Comments - After being unable to find art of a cursed chest or inscribed lockbox as I mentioned, I thought there was no way I'd be able to convey the flavor I wanted and changed the card's name to Cursed Egg. When the card was surprisingly not met with criticism for using Power Overwhelming as the forgotten card, I was motivated once again to find the optimal artwork for the optimal flavor.

The Dark Portal Opens



Top-Down - I knew immediately that I was going to do the opening of the Dark Portal as the warlock rift, since that's one of the original rifts in the Caverns of Time.

Flavor - Warlocks are commonly associated with the Burning Legion and the Demon armies, and the opening of the dark portal is one of the most important events in WoW history related to this. It was pretty clear that I'd use this for the Rift.

Mechanics - The Dark Portal inherently suggests something to do with summoning legions of demons. An early version of this card costed much more and had Mal'ganis's effect as well as a battlecry which summoned voidwalkers. But it felt so static and boring, I wanted to have something that summoned random demons, to make it feel like you were actually commanding a demonic legion instead of just two voidwalkers. What I had to figure out was how to make an interesting condition which could trigger the random demon summon. I had been wanting to explore the self-damage warlock theme, and thought about using this card for synergy. I didn't want to reward the player *whenever* the hero took damage since it wouldn't reward you for doing things like bloodbloom + Doom! So I thought I'd scale the cost of the demon with the damage taken. The only issue here is that there isn't a demon for each mana cost, but because I liked the design of the rift so much I figured I'd design demons to fill the few gaps there were (7, 8, 10), since I wanted to print some high-end demons anyway.

Comments - In the extremely rare edge cases where you take more than 10 damage at once, I haven't decided whether it caps the summon at 10 mana or if it does nothing. Doing nothing is more consistent, although it's disappointing, but that might be okay given how extraordinarily unlikely it is to take 11 damage or more all at the same time.

Imp-ending Doom



Bottom-Up - Ever since we lost Imp-losion, Warlock has taken a big hit to their ability to recover from a losing situation. While Imp-losion was super polarizing and shouldn't be brought back, I feel like they deserve a similar mechanic to replace it.

Mechanics - Once again, we have a recycled card idea from long ago retooled to fit Warlock. This was another card that I originally designed for my Bard class, with the same purpose as this card: To give the class a mechanic to come back from a losing situation.

Flavor - Being an Imp-losion replacement and summoning tokens, it's inevitable that this card had to have an Imp- pun. There aren't that many to choose from. With Phyley's help I had it down to Imp-ending Doom and Imp-act. Imp-act fits the flavor of an AoE ability more, but it felt like the name was lacking something. Imp-ending Doom fit a little better with the time thing and is the actual name of a Warlock talent in WoW that causes Doom (an AoE spell) to cast faster and summon Imps when it deals damage. Even though Imp-ending Doom's name didn't fit quite as well with the mechanics, the flavor was much stronger and the name better, so I went with that.

Comments - Since this is the third reused card concept in Warlock alone, and there have been many cards reused in the past, I want to use this section to write about my policy on reusing cards. Technically, since none of these sets that I'm making will ever actually make it into the game, I can use the same designs over and over without actually creating the same card twice. However, most cards are designed to fit specifically in one context, so just mass-copying old card ideas into a new set is a bad idea. If I don't have any ideas and the time is right, I'll adjust an old version of a card for use in a newer set.

This may be changing, though. As I am taking card design more seriously, I'm treating each expansion as a learning experience and demonstration of ability. While reusing cards when appropriate may lead to a better overall expansion, it is neither good practice nor a demonstration of ability (at least after the first one is put into the public spotlight).

Shivarra Warden



Bottom-Up - As mentioned before, in order to ensure that The Dark Portal Opens has a demon of every cost from 1 to 10 during every standard cycle until it hits wild, this expansion needs to have a 7, 8, and 10 mana Demon. Technically it wouldn't have to have all three in this expansion, but putting the burden on the next expansion to "remember that we need to make a 7-Cost demon because of a card from last expansion" seems like a poor design choice. I also want to use this opportunity to reinvigorate the demon tag and get some nice high-cost Demons, so that Gul'dangerous and Krul can pack a punch.

Mechanics - While it's unreasonable for every single Demon to have a drawback as a battlecry, I do want to make sure we continue to print some high-cost Demons with drawbacks to open up the door for more Demon synergy in the future. The reason that recent Demon support has been so underwhelming (Bloodfury Potion, Crystalweaver) is because the Demon identity is falling apart. Demons are *supposed* to be powerful minions with drawbacks, but too many exist that don't follow this pattern.

As for the specific effect, it was pretty simple - take a generic drawback like deal 3 damage to your hero and attach it to a time-based trigger.

Flavor - Shivarra are demons that I've seen put on a lot of custom cards, so I figured it would eventually be my turn to make one as well. This card seemed to be an appropriate place to put it, so I did. Nothing crazy strong here, but it's tied into the game reasonably well.

Comments - Originally, there was going to be a spell called Banish which was “3 mana - Destroy a minion. Deal 7 damage to your hero.” This opened up some pretty crazy combos, since if you had The Dark Portal Opens and played Banish, you’d destroy a minion, get a Shivarra Warden, then the Warden’s effect would trigger and get you a Void Terror. Neat, but gone.

Dimensius, All-Devouring



Mechanical Comment: A common and reasonable question to ask about Dimensius is how cards are chosen to be discarded. When you play Dimensius, white text appears prompting you to “play any cards you wish to discard.” All the cards in your hand will be green, allowing you to play them, but doing so only leaves them suspended in dark energy above the game board. Then, you can hit either cancel or confirm. Pressing confirm plays a beautiful twisting nether animation where Dimensius sucks all your cards in, and the discards all resolve at once.

Middle-Out - The basics of this card actually came together extremely quickly. This card was made by middle-out simply because the card was made all at once.

Flavor/Mechanics - This card might not immediately make sense as to how it works. I’ll explain it near the end of this section.

This card was made way back when I was designing the Rogue set. As I was creating the Rift “Desolation of K’aresh,” I read about how Dimensius the All-Devouring destroyed their planet. Meanwhile, the moderator of the customhearthstone discord was talking to me about a mechanic he wanted to make work which involved you voluntarily sacrificing a card of a particular type to create an effect. I didn’t really think it would take off as a keyword, but I really

liked the general feel of the “sacrifice something at will” mechanic. I felt like it would be most appropriate as a one-off legendary - and having just read about Dimensius, I had an idea.

The original incarnation of this card was pretty different from its current state. It was “5 mana 4/7. Taunt. You can discard minions directly from your hand to give this +2/+2.” This one was intended to work in a very complicated but nuanced way: At any point during your turn, you could drag a minion out from your hand as if you were playing it normally, but Dimensius’s mouth would open up if you hovered over him and you could drop your card into it, causing it to be discarded.

As you might be able to tell, this version has a lot of problems. The first was that it was very, very strange how this card worked. But I took a stand on this and I said that I liked how it worked differently. I feel like as designers we need to push the limits of what Hearthstone can do. In this particular case, I had a vision for the effect visuals, where the minion is sucked into Dimensius’s mouth as if it had been hit by the Twisting Nether ability, which is one of the favorite animations of all time. The raw satisfaction derived from this mechanic was enough to justify the card.

But there were more problems beyond this. First, it was overpowered, so it was nerfed to 6 mana 4/6. But then I realized that it was an infinite combo with Clutchmother Zavas, and it was pretty embarrassing that I hadn’t realized it earlier.

So I changed the functionality slightly, which had the triple benefit of simplifying the card, removing the infinite combo, and maintaining the satisfying mechanics. So then we were at “6 mana 4/6 Taunt, Battlecry: Discard as many cards as you want, gain +2/+2 for each.”

I don’t remember the exact reason but we felt we should up the card’s cost to be safe. Changing the cost to 8 had the added benefit of filling the 8-cost Demon slot for the rift without having to design another one. However, at this point, +2/+2 felt underwhelming per discard on an 8 mana body. So I tried other stat bonuses - a 5/5 that got +3/+3 for discarded cards, even tried upping it to a 10 mana 6/6 that got a whopping +4/+4 per discard.

But then we were getting into the realm where the card either felt disappointing, or it felt like you could instantly make The Ancient One without any condition whatsoever. These both felt like the wrong answer. So, I decided to change the reward per discard while keeping the core mechanic the same. Being a Warlock main and having played the hell out of Renolock, I know how hard the lack of healing is hitting the class. This was an opportunity to change that - plus, it still had good flavor, since devouring other things to heal yourself is a pretty common theme. Some minor stat changes later, and that’s where we got to the card we have today.

Comments - This is one of the few cards in the set (as of writing this, the only card) where I said that I would print it or something like it regardless of the feedback that other designers gave me. This is because it gets at something beyond “A Warlock Legendary with a new mechanic.” It’s a

card whose main selling point is not just that it's powerful, but that it's fun to use. I spent a lot of time thinking about how the card would work visually. I settled on it functioning like this: When you play it, you're prompted to play any cards you wish to discard. You're then allowed to play any cards that you want, which turn into spheres of void energy and hover around Dimensius at the locations on the screen near where you played them. Then, you hit the confirm button, and Dimensius sucks them all in in one rapid and satisfying motion, the effect resolves, and you get your Health and Zavas procs, etc.

I recently finished an 8-week class in programming in Virtual Reality, where I had to create my own small game over the period of a few weeks. It was the first game I ever made, and I had a lot of issues planning out exactly what I wanted to do (I ended up scrapping the first project and starting a completely new one a week in). However, in all this confusion, there was a feature that I knew I wanted *no matter what*: Long-range grabbing. I wanted the player to be able to reach their arm out to a far away object, press a button, and have it zip through the air to them. I just had this gut feeling about how incredibly satisfying and fun to use that mechanic would be. In the finished product, people absolutely loved it, and I absolutely loved creating it.

I am still new to development so I can't say for sure, but designing satisfying, visceral mechanics may be my biggest strength and passion. That same gut feeling that I got telling me that Long-range grabbing would be awesome is telling me that playing Dimensius would be equally awesome. And making the cards themselves fun to play is just as important as the strategies and abilities behind them.

Dreadlord



Bottom-Up - I wanted a card besides The Dark Portal Opens to synergize with self damage, and I wanted one in a way that could do more if you took more damage. I also needed to fill the 10 mana Demon slot.

Mechanics - This card didn't really change much over time. It was really just a question of what exactly its attack and Health would be and whether it would be damage taken this turn or self-inflicted damage throughout the entire game. Damage taken throughout the entire game was simply too strong at 10 mana, so it had to be this turn only.

Flavor - Back when this card kept its cost reduction throughout the whole game, it was a class giant called Fel Giant. However when it got changed to this turn only, it was simply too weak as an 8/8, so it got buffed to 10/10 and couldn't be a giant anymore. Given that I had already created Shivarra Warden, I drew on another iconic (and very nice-looking) Demon from that area. It is a bit similar to Despicable Dreadlord, but there's also Doomguard and Fearsome Doomguard, so yeah.

Comments - What's interesting to me is how this card is OP as a 10 mana giant which keeps its cost reductions through the whole game. The old Molten Giant at 20 mana was definitely a powerhouse card, but it was by no means gamebreaking. Yet, it's not like you expect 50% of the damage you take in a warlock game to come from yourself... the card is fine currently, but this was mystifying me...

Warrior: Album

Warrior is the first of the last four classes, all of which were made in relatively quick succession. It is also the first class where the time constraint of the expansion (me leaving for college) became apparent. It has somewhat unified flavor, and is one of the (sadly) few number of classes themed off of the future - since no matter what time period, the one constant truth in the universe is conflict.

Mechanically, self-damage is the largest theme explored in this set. Originally I wasn't sure if I should provide support to this archetype - I don't play that much warrior, and so normally I just default on "let's give self-damage cards to warrior since self-damage isn't a deck yet." But I felt like I should give self-damage warrior a spin (especially since I opened the Warrior DK) and see if it was actually worth designing around. Short answer: Yes. I had such a blast playing self-damage warrior at legend even though it wasn't super viable, trying out all kinds of janky combos and loving those kreygasm moments where you get huge value with a whirlwind effect. I feel like this archetype definitely deserves the support it gets, since it creates really fun gameplay experiences.

Scorpid Stinger



Bottom-Up - (Forgotten Card). I might as well also take this time to point out that a forgotten card doesn't necessarily *have* to be designed bottom-up if a flavorful idea flashes into my mind, but it usually doesn't turn out that way.

Mechanics - Similarly to other cards, the way I decided on the trigger for warrior's forgotten card was first by looking at the iconic mechanics of their class to see if there was a fitting trigger there. Weapons are a huge part of warrior, so I considered how I might add it onto a weapon. "Whenever this weapon kills a minion" is a pretty obvious option, but I was having trouble finding an interesting but balanced statline. I remembered that the "if this kills a minion" trigger is more interesting on a 1-damage effect, since it requires you to put more planning into how you get the minion's health to exactly 1. This fits perfectly in self-damage warrior, which has many whirlwind effects and ways to deal 1 damage, it becomes another piece in the puzzle of "do I have enough damage from hand to kill that minion?"

Flavor - Admittedly, the flavor for this card is not great. I just said that the warrior set revolved mainly around the future and eternal conflict, and then I print this card, which is based on the past. This is what I meant when I said that this was the first class where my time restriction came into consideration. Frostivus pointed out to me that the flavor was poor, and I agreed with him but said that I didn't have time to spend on finding a better name for such a basic card.

[Update]: Another card targeted in the flavor overhaul. Now that we've expanded to desert/Tanaris thematics, we can use stuff from some of the creatures in there (namely scorpids since I also used one in the hunter set). Why does killing something with a scorpion's stinger produce inner rage? Well, there is some strand of logic saying that some poisons can mess with

your mind and make you enraged, but I think the real answer is that it doesn't. But it connects with the theme of the expansion and doesn't make 0 sense, which is what matters more I think.

Comments - Originally, this card's name was Pain Stake, but it was changed due to not having any flavor with the time theme, and because the art was not of a stake.

End of the Line



Top-Down - I specifically remember this image from a while ago and wanted to make a card based around it.

Flavor - This was the last warrior card I designed for the set, and I wanted to round it out with something flavorful, so I thought about card names that would fit well with this "war until the end of the world" idea. "End of the Line" came to mind, and as I said in the previous section, this beautiful piece of artwork immediately came to my mind. So I was certain I wanted to make a card called End of the Line with this piece as the art.

Mechanics - End of the Line naturally lends itself to interacting with the last card in your deck or the bottom of your deck, the type of effect you'd expect to have its effect when the game runs all the way to fatigue. I've seen effects like this before, and the problem is always that since they have no immediate impact, they are completely useless, and even the decks which utilize them to their maximum potential don't get much value. The simple yet effective solution: Add draw a card. Warrior has a huge precedent of interesting spell effects which also cycle, and so this fits in nicely with those.

Comments - The black border you see around the edge of this art is what happens when you edit a card on Hearthcards whose art was not uploaded via url. I should really fix that...

You From The Future



Middle-Out - This one is an interesting middle-out, as you'll see with the double Flavor section.

Flavor - This card was originally designed by someone else for a different, secret design project that I was working on. It had the name "Stop Hitting Yourself," as a more funny and lighthearted way to go about implementing the self-damage theme (as was appropriate for this secret project).

Mechanics - This card's original implementation seemed relatively weak, and it had absolutely no application outside of minions with "whenever this minion takes damage" effects (and some of those didn't even work with the effect). I then gave my take on the "stop hitting yourself" card, which was this effect. People seemed to generally like it, but in the end, the warrior set didn't have any room, so this design landed in my lap to use for my warrior set.

Flavor - Now that it was in the time set, I would have to alter the flavor so that it made more sense. One of the best ways to make flavors is to play into tropes and cliches, because you know that your players will recognize those ideas. One big time travel cliché is someone who is leading an otherwise ordinary life, when suddenly a mysterious figure appears from a portal in front of them and says, "I am **you** from the future, and I have come back in time to kill my past self to prevent me from making [some horrible mistake]!" So I then named it "You From The

Future.” Surprisingly, a small number of people have understood this cliché, even though I swear it’s really common...

Comments - A big debate for me was whether or not I should capitalize “From The,” based on the punctuation in Hearthstone I think lowercase would have technically been correct, but for some reason it just looked *wrong* when it wasn’t capitalized when I put it on the card.

Armageddon Vanguard



Bottom-Up - With the introduction of “You From The Future,” I felt like I should really have more cards which synergized with it, namely, low attack, high health, and a “whenever this minion takes damage” effect.

Mechanics - I’ve always felt like self-damage warrior needs another card which triggers on more than just itself. In its current state, the deck puts a ton of pressure on getting a really huge frothing berserker since that’s really the only card that can combo with damaging a huge board. So I wanted to have a minion that triggered whenever a friendly minion took damage, I was just unsure if there were any triggered effects that were weak enough to be put on this trigger. Dealing 1 damage to a random enemy is worth pretty little, and so I made the card.

Flavor - Here’s the first card which I wanted to tie into the Armageddon flavor. Armageddon’s literal definition is the final battle between the forces of good and evil. So here’s a Warrior who’s

ready for Armageddon - not just ready, but embracing Armageddon. He's first in line for Armageddon. Hence, Armageddon Vanguard.

Blood of Mannoroth



Top-Down - Drinking the blood of Mannoroth is a pretty obvious choice for the warrior rift as that's one of the most iconic moments in WoW.

Flavor - There isn't really much to be said. The Blood of Mannoroth is an obvious choice, it fits with the self-damage/enrage theme, hell, there was an entire expansion whose premise was to go back in time and change the proceedings of this event.

Mechanics - Based on the flavor of Blood of Mannoroth, the blood causes people to be victims to their bloodlust. This is a natural fit for self-damage mechanics. The first iteration of this card gave all minions "Enrage: +4 Attack," but this version was deemed to be more interesting and have more interactions. It's also symmetrical, since it's generally important to make sure that rifts can be interacted with by your opponent, so having an effect that also affects their minions is one way to accomplish that.

Comments - One thing I am sort of disappointed with this card is that it takes one of the most iconic events of all time and makes it a rare. I am deliberating changing this card, but there probably isn't enough time to do so.

Kargath Bladefist



Top-Down - In order to give warrior's legendary some sort of tie into time travel, I felt the best path would be to make it one of the alternate universe characters from Warlords of Draenor.

Flavor - I asked in the discord, "Who's the coolest Warlord of Draenor?" and the response was a resounding "Kargath." This would work nicely for a self-damage legendary, since Kargath literally incites a huge group of orcs to cut their own hands off and then fight for their freedom.

Mechanics - From playing self-damage warrior, the deck is lacking a 5-drop. Gurubashi Berserker doesn't really pull its weight (although, it's not as bad as you might expect). I also saw that giving warrior a way to buff up their damaged minions would be extremely useful, since the best combo minions often end up having very low attack and health, and even though you have a huge hand and a huge board you don't have that much power. Giving +2/+2 to your damaged minions was an effect that I had already considered, and I felt like it would work well on this minion as an end of turn trigger, so I removed that old card (which was called second wind) to make this one.

I made sure that his effect applies to himself so that if you've generated an Inner Rage from Scorpion Stinger then you can use it on him on T5 for a solid (6/6) standalone 5 drop.

Comments - This card is extremely good with You From the Future... in an attempt to make a lot of cards that synergize with it, I've created some really crazy combos. This card for example creates two 6/7s that give your damaged minions +4/+4 for only 7 mana. If I do nerf You From The Future, I'll increase the cost to 3 mana, makes it generally weaker and removes the rotface combo.

Suit Up!



Bottom-Up - The design of this card is rooted in a discussion I had with Frostivus and Coolboypai about designing control warrior cards.

Mechanics - Control warrior is the typical embodiment of the "Juggernaut Control" archetype, where you stockpile resources and armor until your opponent has no chance of victory. From the small amount of experience I have playing C'thun warrior, I understand that intensely satisfying feeling of putting on a huge amount of Armor. This card is not designed to be strong, but rather, it's designed to be fun, and appealing to this type of player. This card takes advantage of something we've been calling Shock Value, which is where the sheer size of the numbers on a card are impressive enough to make players want to use it.

Flavor - This flavor was suggested to me by someone else, using the phrase which is pretty familiar to sci-fi or superhero movies where the characters equip their most powerful armor. This is more reflective of the future/time theme than the previous name (Reinforced Armor).

Comments - There's the slight possibility that this cards goes to 5 mana, where it may very well be playable. But I'm not really interested in making this card viable, in fact I like having a few suboptimal cards to round out the set.

Space Moorine



Top-Down - I had always been wanting to make a card or two in this expansion that came from outside of the WoW universe, and given that this art was available, I felt like I should really make a Tauren Terran warrior card.

Flavor - Phyley the flavormaster suggested "Moorine" as the name, given the art, and that immediately became "Space Moorine."

Mechanics - The most distinctive feature about the Terran, at least from my non-starcraft perspective, is their bulky armor. So I wanted to create an effect that had some minor synergy with Armor, with most of its value frontloaded onto a solid body. The card quickly came together, changing from its original effect of "Battlecry: If you have at least 5 armor, gain Taunt" to "Battlecry: If you have Armor, gain Taunt" and finally to its current state, since the effect was simple, interesting and interactive.

Comments - Making a card from outside the WoW universe might be kind of a stretch, but I wanted to use this to test the waters. Let me know what you guys think (if anyone is actually down here on page 66 reading this).

Arm of Geddon



Top-Down - The story of this card is pretty funny, as you'll see.

Flavor - So I wanted to make some cards for warrior themed around Armageddon, and I was wondering how I would make flavor. One foolproof method for flavor is to make a pun, so I looked at the word Armageddon to see if there were any puns in it. I quickly saw the "Arma" sounding like "Arm of." That left me with "Arm of Geddon."

"If only there was a character in WoW named Geddon..."

"Wait a second..."

And so the card instantly came into creation.

Mechanics - Since this card was originally created by a meme, I decided to try to take this idea to its extreme and see if I could also make the effect based off of this meme. Dealing 2 damage to all characters was the obvious effect, and I put it at the same cost as Geddon. Surprisingly, it worked out pretty well! It's a viable contender to Gorehowl's throne and works against a different set of decks, while still reflecting classic warrior flavor and mechanics.

Comments - This card is a candidate for my Best 9, as it has been received extremely well. It's a combination of interesting yet simple mechanics and a great pun.

Shaman: Album

Shaman is another one of the sets that came together fairly quickly. It had roughly average views on the first /5 pass, but I had a lot of “backup” designs that I was able to quickly substitute in which meant that the Second Pass was up very soon after.

There are two main archetypes that are supported in this Shaman set: Freeze and Totem. I'll use this space to talk about my overall plans for each of them.

My previous project was an Icecrown Citadel adventure, with similar themes to the recent Knights of the Frozen Throne expansion. In that set, I decided to give Shaman more access to Freeze, since it's something that's clearly in their class identity but isn't really explored at all. Then, Blizzard made the same choice to push Freeze shaman, and while the archetype is very weak I thought that the Freeze cards that they made were really interesting. So I thought it felt natural to make more cards to push this archetype since it could potentially be very fun to play. However, I then revisited this idea in the same way that I revisited self-damage Warrior - is this deck actually fun enough to be worth pushing? So I watched some Freeze shaman videos and even made a budget version of the deck myself. It functioned differently than I expected but I was really impressed, the deck was fun to play. This reaffirmed my intentions to create Freeze cards.

The second archetype I pushed in this set is the Totem archetype. I don't think this was as strong of a push as Freeze shaman, but I did introduce two new powerful Totems and a legendary which makes them significantly more powerful. I focused on this aspect because I think totems are really defining for what makes Shaman different from Mage and once again they aren't really explored at all. The identity of a totem is a low-attack, relatively low-cost minion which gets value by having a persistent effect. I imagine the ideal situation for a Shaman, where they've deployed several different totems and can now sit back and let them generate value. It's sort of like the turret-builder archetype in several action games. The reason that totems need help to accomplish this fantasy is simply because they've mostly been ignored. Last time we got notable totem support, it was with Totem Golem, which doesn't really tie into the Totem identity at all. While I don't think I've printed enough cards to make a viable “Totem Shaman” deck, hopefully this is a step in the right direction.

Ancestral Legacy



Bottom-Up - This is a card which was carried over from my previous ICC set. It was designed around the effect of generating value for control Shaman, when slower Shaman decks were still just starting to appear.

Mechanics - Shaman has always had flavor with bringing minions back to fight multiple times. Reincarnate, Ancestral Spirit, Spirit echo, etc. These types of effects inherently synergize with high-value minions, and so that type of “Bring something back to play again” seemed like a good way to nudge control decks. Originally, the effect was “Discover a friendly minion that died this game,” which had a better fit with Icecrown Citadel flavor, but this new version both makes it so that the Discover pool isn’t clogged by your totems, and has acceptable flavor with a time set.

Overload (1) was added to this simple effect to make it more balance, in a very shaman-y way.

Flavor - Originally, the flavor was designed to fit into the same themes as Ancestral Spirit, with more of a focus on the “Ancestral” in reference to “those who came before you.” So instead of spirit I used “legacy,” which reflected this pretty well. Luckily, this flavor worked even better with the Time Set when I moved it over, so I didn’t have to change it.

Comments - If I remember correctly, this design was actually inspired by a card created by a user named Disco a long time ago, I think it was a 6 mana minion for shaman that discovered a minion that died this game? I criticized this card because I thought it didn’t make sense with

Shaman themes, but a few days later, I realized that I was the one who was wrong. The effect has changed since his original version, but I just want to make sure I'm giving credit where credit is due, and also saying that my criticism of this idea was undeserved.

Call to the Elements



Top-Down - This was one of the earlier cards in the set, and so my main focus in making the card was "What do Shamans do that's related to time?"

Flavor - The flavor of this card was inspired by a WoW cinematic that I saw a relatively long time ago that had a surprisingly strong emotional impact on me. It was the cinematic for the Rage of the Firelands patch, where Thrall is out trying to commune with the elements at the Maelstrom, and he isn't getting an answer. As a Shaman, your powers are inherently restricted by the responsiveness of the higher power that you call upon, the Elements. For some reason, the feeling of being in your time of need but having the Elements go silent really got to me, and I wanted to capture that in a card.

Mechanics - This card's mechanics aim to capture the fundamental nature of asking the Elements for power and getting a response that's out of your control. As it goes in the cinematic, Thrall waits for a very long time to get a response from Ragnaros. One of the main ways to create an unpredictable delay in Hearthstone is to shuffle something into your deck. So then I just had to figure out exactly what the Elements would do when they responded, what's something that a control Shaman would actually want. Card draw is crucial to control decks, however Shaman is a class that's purposefully given unreliable card draw. While this card is a

very powerful card draw engine, the fact that it shuffles into your deck makes it unreliable enough to work in shaman, as well as having nice numerical flavor with drawing 1 card for each Elemental lord.

Also, remember that “The Elements Respond” doesn’t have the “When you draw this, draw a card” that most of these types of card tend to have, so it’s really technically “Draw 3 cards after a long delay” instead of 4.

Comments - In the very early stages of the expansion, each class was going to have a cycle of “Duality” cards, which were complementary in terms of flavor or mechanics. For example, there was going to be one warlock card which discarded your highest cost card, and another one that discarded your lowest. This was going to be the one of the two “Duality” cards, with the other one being called Coerce the Elements, which read “Draw x cards, summon x Flame Elementals for your opponent,” in an attempt to capture the two sides of the shaman coin. Most shamans wait patiently for the elements to aid them, other evil shamans (if I’m not mistaken) can force the elements to do their bidding, but in return turn the elements against them.

Chillburst Totem



Top-Down - I wanted to make a new Totem or two for Shaman, so I looked up the list of all the Totems shamans have had in all the warcraft games and made some totems based on those.

Flavor - Chillburst Totem was on the list of “Water” totems. Since I had been thinking about making more Freeze cards, I saw the obvious opportunity to create a card in the intersection of Freeze and Totem effects.

Mechanics - After deciding that I wanted to make a Freezing Totem, this effect came to mind as the simplest way to do so that also ties into the flavor of the expansion.

Comments - This totem may be getting nerfed, the most likely nerf being to a 2 mana 0/2 Totem.

Taunka Frostcaller



Bottom-Up - This is an idea adapted from my Icecrown Citadel expansion to fit into the Freeze Shaman archetype.

Mechanics - Cards which deal with positioning is usually a surefire way to create interesting interactions for both players. This falls under the type of “unconventional positioning” cards, which does less to the minion in the middle than to the ones on the side (which also ties into Avalanche). This type of card shows the unique identity of Freeze Shaman, which in its current form relies on minions that Freeze other minions and then using Spirit Echo to get more copies of them.

Flavor - In the Shaman set I wanted to explore a bit about the very first Shamans. According to the lore, the first races to practice Shamanism were Yaungols, and their close descendents, the Taunka. Both of them are ancestors of modern day Taurens and look similar but with white fur.

Comments - This art is not actually a picture of a Taunka, it's just a Tauren with white fur. There is only one well-made picture of a Yaungol/Taunka that's passable as a Shaman, and I'm already using it on another card in this set.

This image was actually repurposed from a card called Spellseeker after hours of looking for art to no avail (and since Spellseeker is a pretty generic term that can be represented by more than just a white Tauren).

Fire Nova Totem



Top-Down - Same design story as Chillburst Totem, I wanted to make more Totems to fulfill the Totem Shaman fantasy so I looked up a list of possible Totems that I could make.

Flavor - Pretty much explained in the above section, I found "Fire Nova Totem" under the "Fire" totems section. Unsurprisingly, it's a totem that deals AoE damage over time.

Mechanics - This effect is probably the most fitting effect to what the Totem actually does in-game, and I think that it also helps fulfill the fantasy pretty well. Play two of these and sit back and relax as you burn away your opponent's board, and also their hero's health.

Comments - This effect is dangerously similar to Despicable Dreadlord's, and surprisingly, many of the people giving feedback did not seem to care. Originally instead of a 1 damage AoE this card used to cast a larger Arcane Missile type effect at the end of each turn, but people rated that version poorly and rated this version better. I believe that the Totem statline (0 attack) makes such a huge impact on how the card functions in-game that it feels significantly different from Despicable Dreadlord.

Forgotten Yaungol



Bottom-Up - Forgotten card, and as a matter of fact, the only Forgotten card to have the word “forgotten” in its name.

Mechanics - I decided on “Frost Shock” as the Forgotten card pretty quickly, as when I was experimenting with Freeze shaman there definitely was the consideration of running Frost Shock since it is extremely efficient with the synergies in the deck, however, it’s just not good enough to run on its own which makes it an excellent candidate to be a Forgotten card.

This was the second Forgotten card designed. The “At the end of your turn” fits in nicely with the other Shaman effects in the set, and inherently works well with Freeze synergy and its own effect.

Flavor - As I mentioned on Taunka Frostcaller, I wanted to look into the very first practitioners of Shamanism. I used the name “Forgotten” to reflect how he was lost, out in the cold (hence generating Frost Shocks) as well as how he is of an ancient race. There was also previously the idea that maybe all the Forgotten cards would have Forgotten in their name, but that limited flavor opportunities (especially with Hit and Run being such an excellent name).

Comments - There’s a possibility that this card gets completely scrapped for two reasons.

- 1) It’s a bit redundant on top of Chillburst Totem, and
- 2) There ended up being more Totem synergy in the set than expected, so suddenly Totemic Memes-Might becomes a viable option to be the Forgotten card.

The Maelstrom



Top-Down - In the design of this card I heavily prioritized taking inspiration from the Maelstrom as a chaotic pool of elemental energy in the middle of the world over creating a rift which tied directly into the themes of the set.

Flavor - The Maelstrom is a pretty clear choice for Shaman's Rift, especially since I am particularly attached to the image of Thrall in front of the Maelstrom in that cutscene I mentioned for Call to the Elements. Also, if you look up the Maelstrom on the wiki, it's literally described as "...the gigantic **rift** that was created when the Well of Eternity collapsed into itself during the Great Sundering..." (technically this is referring to a different meaning of Rift, but still).

Mechanics - Shaman has always been the RNG class (if you can even call that a real part of their class identity) and so fully embracing the chaos of the Maelstrom seemed like my best course of action. To be honest, I'm not exactly sure how I arrived at this final option, but people generally seemed to like it as a "Fun, but not viable" style of card. I did want to make sure that there was some agency with this card, and that comes in the form of certain cards that either don't require targets or that can only target friendly minions, which shaman tends to have plenty of.

One critique of this design was that the condition that determines which cards are good with this is relatively arbitrary. I think that's extremely valid criticism, but this issue seemed to actually benefit the card. I saw discussions about the card and it really forced people to rethink old cards to see how well they synergized with this, and as usual, I think cards that encourage players to rethink what they know to look for the best synergies are really fun to have.

Comments - This is actually the second version of Maelstrom, revised after I finally decided that the original version was just too janky.

The original version was one of the strangest designs I had ever decided to print. Its effect was this: "Whenever a minion passes through the center of the board, deal 5 damage to it."

This effect has pretty clear flaws, which is why it was why it was scrapped, but I think it comes closer to working than you might originally think, and so we learn some important lessons from this card.

First of all, I need to clarify how this version would have worked. While the Maelstrom was active, there would be a miniature graphic depicting the swirling Maelstrom in the center of the board. Minions would take damage if they passed through the exact center dot on the board, meaning both crossing the board horizontally and vertically. Minions can only cross the board vertically when they attack, so the first condition for a minion to be damaged by the Maelstrom is for it to attack. Secondly, they have to cross the board horizontally - if you use a minion on the left to attack a minion on the right, it passes through the middle, causing it to take damage. The formal rule was "Whenever a minion on the left side attacks an enemy on the right side (or vice versa), it takes damage," and the middle spot that you get when you have an odd number of minions counts as being on both sides so it will always cause the attacker to take damage.

Needless to say, this is a pretty complicated set of rules, but the reason that I thought this card had potential is because it was actually a reasonable set of rules - cross from one side to the other, and you'll take damage - as opposed to some completely ambiguous concept that depended on the animation of minions attacking. Furthermore, I think the counterintuitiveness of this card is compensated for by the fact that once this card is played, it's very easy to figure out what it will do even if you don't already know what it does. In all likelihood, this implementation of the card would have the "attack" cursor have an indicator like an (!) to show that your current attack will cause your minion to take damage. So even if you don't understand the rules at all, you'd still be able to take your turn without completely unintended things happening. This is a pretty common design practice, where with cards like Kazakus that don't really explain how they work, the card guides you step by step through the process so you know what you're doing.

Before I tear it apart, I want to talk about the merits of this version: One of the most iconic facts about the Maelstrom is how it's the center of every WoW map, and this effect directly capitalized on that. Not to mention, it has the inherent fun present in any positioning based card without the ambiguity that they typically do. This type of design which is super positioning focused was inspired by Frostivus, and his willingness to make very odd "out there" cards since they usually end up being fun in the end (he seemed to be interested in this version, and offered to get it animated for me - I think he has a soft spot for this type of design :P).

The aspect of this card that tore it apart is that the rule I had for how the card worked, was actually counterintuitive in one case. Imagine one player having 7 minions and the other having only one. Under these rules, if the leftmost minion attacks that one center minion, it takes damage even though it doesn't pass directly through the center. This on its own isn't too bad. However, if both players control two minions and one player attacks with their leftmost minion into their opponent's leftmost minion, that minion wouldn't take damage, even though it gets relatively close to the center of the board. Again, on its own, this is okay. The issue lies in the fact that the minion in the second case comes *much* closer to the center than minion in the first case, so you'd intuitively expect them to behave oppositely.

Furthermore, while this card does have its advantages, they aren't quite worth how clunky the effect was. I think it got closer to being considerable than many other designs that attempt to accomplish the same thing, but nevertheless it failed. Luckily I was able to replace it with this version fairly quickly.

Instant Evolution



Bottom-Up - This is another one of those cards that came to me relatively quickly, but it was definitely rooted more in the mechanics than the flavor.

Mechanics - This card capitalizes pretty heavy on the Shock value, by putting a "7" where you're normally expecting to see a "1" or a "2". The only real consideration I gave to this card was if it should maybe evolve for 5 at a cost of 5 instead of 7 for 7, but people liked the 7 mana version anymore. The reason I was thinking about doing the 5 for 5 version is because of concerns of how you'd be completely unable to use this card on any minion that costed (6) or more. My

solution to this is a slight change to the current way that the Evolve mechanic works (which only affects one other card in a very minor way).

The creation of this card assumes the following change: For evolutions of more than 1 mana, the minion will be Evolved as high as it possibly can, rather than only evolving if there is a minion that costs exactly that much more. For example, using Deathseer Thrall's Battlecry on Snowfury Giant would currently cause nothing to happen, but under the new rules it would evolve into a Mountain Giant.

I implemented this because it seemed sad for the situation where a player plays such a huge spell on an already huge minion to cause literally nothing to happen in most cases.

One critique I received from Phyley was that this decreased the amount of strategy in the card - instead of trying to evolve the minions that need it most, you'd just use it on whatever and it'd be fine. I don't think this criticism applies, since it is almost always inefficient to use this card on an already-large minion (since even though *something* happens, you don't get the full effect out of it). This means you still want to prioritize your low-cost minions, but aren't super disappointed when you have to use this on your Big-Time Racketeer and nothing happens.

Farseer Nobundo



Bottom-Up - After my old incarnation of Farseer Nobundo as the Shaman legendary was met with low /5 reviews (not really surprising, it wasn't the coolest design), I immediately set to work with Phyley on creating a cooler version more fitting to be Farseer Nobundo.

[Update]: This card received a nerf from a 7 mana 4/9 to an 8 mana 3/8. It was supposed to be very punishable by being very slow, even when you do connect it on an amazing target, but at a 7 mana 4/9 it just wasn't punishable enough at all. Most of the logic about how this card was designed and balanced remains the same, so I'll leave the original thought process untouched. The only thing that changes is that now anything costing (2) or more has to live through the turn, instead of (3) or more.

Mechanics - Originally, this card was a 4 mana minion that gained the effect of each totem you'd played this game, naturally synergizing with the concept of totems being powerful aura effects on (almost literal) sticks. Phyley's first version let you choose a friendly totem and give its effect to the rest of the totems you played this game. I thought that this was really awesome, and I started thinking of stats and a mana cost to give it.

During this process, our ideas diverged. I had the idea of bumping up the mana cost to something very high and unreliable, and Phyley had the idea of making a cascading Deathrattle which passed on the effects of each Totem to all future totems. We had a small discussion and I decided to go with my idea.

Flavor - Farseer Nobundo is a reasonable fit for this card, taking one effect and projecting it far out into the future. It's not a perfect match, but many Legendaries aren't perfect matches.

Comments - There is one interaction which I haven't quite decided on for this card. This card's effect is nuanced enough that it could be ruled either way with regards to how Battlecries worked - if you copied a minion with a battlecry effect, would Totems that you play from your hand have that Battlecry? There are two results of this: one, Nobundo probably becomes considerably stronger, but hopefully not dangerously strong, since his strength is limited by the fact that unless the battlecry you're trying to copy is on a minion costing 3 or less (meaning it's probably weak) then your opponent has an opportunity to kill that minion and ruin your combo. Two, it restricts the design space of totems since it prevents us from designing Totems with targeted Battlecries. This restriction isn't all that bad though, since I don't think Totems should have targeted Battlecries in the first place. But it has a permanent impact on all future Totem designs, like how Fandral impacts Choose One cards, so we need to consider it carefully.

Hunter: [Album](#)

When designing for Hunter, the first thing that immediately comes to mind is the Control Hunter question. It's a pretty divisive issue in the customhs community (insofar as an issue can actually be divisive in a large group of people who make fake cards for a children's card game), where some people really try to push the archetype whereas others sigh as they see generic Control Hunter Card #10,056.

In the past I've fallen on the Pro Control Hunter side. Based on some of the lesser used Hunter cards, we can see that all the way since hunter's origin in the classic set, removal and board control were supposed to be big hunter themes. According to Blizzard (citation needed) they originally had the idea of making Hunter a control-oriented class, where they could use their hero power to whittle down the enemy hero and control the board with their spells and minions. Hunter's removal spells are some of the coolest in my opinion (who *doesn't* like the sniper cursor?), and since Control is clearly *somewhere* in their class's original identity, I feel like it should really be given a chance.

However, my beliefs about Control Hunter were tested in a long conversation with Phyley and Frostivus, and while I did end up still printing a few Control-oriented cards, I did learn a lot from the experience in terms of how to design Control cards for hunter, if at all. I'll share these insights as they come up on the relevant cards.

Raised By Wolves



Middle-Out - The name of this card changed halfway through the process, which in turn changed the mechanics of the card.

Flavor/Mechanics - I had the idea of making a cheap card with powerful Deathrattle synergy, and I felt the best way to do this would be a spell that gives a minion a Deathrattle (so that you can use the lack of this card having a body to make the Deathrattle stronger). Originally, I wanted it to summon a Silverback patriarch. However, a 1 mana spell that gives a minion "Deathrattle: Summon a 1/4 Beast with Taunt" was definitely on the very strong side.

At this time I started thinking about flavor, and how summoning an animal could tie in with something about someone's past. I thought of doing a play on "Raised by Wolves," by changing it to "Raised by Gorillas." This name wasn't the best.

So then I had the obvious idea - why not just change the name to "Raised by Wolves" and make it actually summon wolves (dire wolf alpha)? It solved both the balance and the flavor problem, so I did it.

Comments - An alternate version of this card could summon two Timber Wolves, but this might be too strong. It does have (slightly) better flavor, though.

Lie in Wait



Middle-Out - Lie in Wait used to be a completely different card which was designed bottom-up, but then I realized that it was non-functional and so I reworked it based on the flavor.

Mechanics - Originally this card was one of three cards in a cycle called "Choice secrets." The idea was that these three secrets would be targetable, though your targeting cursor would be hidden when you played these cards. That way it added another level to the mind game, not only what you played but who you played it on. For example, the most well-received choice secret was the 3 mana mage secret: "Choose a minion. Secret: When it dies, deal 3 damage to all minions."

However, I realized that hearthstone actually requires secrets to be non-targeted as we can see in Mysterious Challenger and Mad Scientist. This makes choice-secrets non-functional, and so I had to rework them all.

Flavor - Lie in Wait is the only one of the three choice secrets that kept its original name and theme, since I thought that "Lie in Wait" was an excellent time-ish themed card that played right into the hunter fantasy. Based on this iconic image of the hunter that patiently waits for the perfect opportunity and then lunges out to attack their prey, I created this Swamp King Dred-esque effect where you jump out and attack.

Mechanics - The first variation I had of this card felt too similar to snipe, where you interrupt an attack by dealing 4 damage, so I was trying to think of ways to keep the same general function while differentiating it. First was giving your hero attack instead of dealing damage, which evolved into equipping your hero with a weapon.

A friend was talking to me about the state of secret hunter, and one of his complaints was that the only worthwhile secret synergy card was Eaglehorn Bow. So I always had the idea of wanting to make another secret synergy engine. Originally, this card only equipped you with a 3/2 weapon, but then I saw the opportunity to make this secret a real powerhouse card and change that 3/2 weapon into an Eaglehorn Bow, to take some pressure off of drawing eaglehorn bow itself.

The card was already strong as a 3/2 weapon and this version might make it absolutely insane, in which case a reversion to a vanilla 3/2 weapon is in order.

Comments - Like Noble Sacrifice, this interrupts the attack. However, if you can't kill the target with the 3 damage, it will continue to attack as normal (though it will have taken 3 damage). Some people have asked **and yes, the bow does lose durability from this attack, so it's a 3/1 after the secret resolves.**

Blink Dog



Top-Down - Ever since I read about the Blink Dog in Dungeons and Dragons, I thought, "Holy shit, this is the best creature I've ever seen." A dog that blinks in and out of existence at random times is just so funny to me. When I saw that the Emerald Dream contains Blink Dogs, I knew it had to happen.

Flavor - As their name somewhat suggests, Blink Dogs randomly blink in and out of existence, appearing at different places and times. This ties nicely into the theme of time/dimensional shenanigans, as well as being a beast for hunter, and fulfilling the hunter cute dog quota.

Mechanics - The exact effect of this card was pretty hard to capture. I wanted something that would disappear and then come back later to capture the general thing of a blink dog. But when would it disappear? When would it come back? How? Why?

After fiddling around with various effects, I settled on this one since it fit into hunter's "sticky minions" theme, was reminiscent of Explorer's Hat, and had some minor Deathrattle synergy. It's certainly not a strong card, but a fun and cute one, which is really the goal of Blink Dog anyway.

Comments - I'm not entirely sure what the animation for this card's deathrattle might look like for it to be the most intuitive. I think for certain that instead of crumbling and dying like most cards it would sort of vanish, but how do we link the Deathrattle effect appearing on a friendly minion to the fact that Blink Dog is going to be coming back?

Also, this card came under a lot of fire for being very "customhs" which is our snide way of saying that it's bad because it's unoriginal relative to the subreddit (it's been posted on

/r/customhearthstone a lot). Recently I thought a lot about whether or not this criticism is valid and I decided that it's not depending on your goal in designing the card, so I went through with it anyway.

Armed and Ready



Bottom-Up - The goal here was to create a small value card for hunter. I just don't think it's healthy for a class to be able to only play midrange curvestone because absolutely none of the value cards in the class are viable. The goal wasn't to upturn hunter identity and create control hunter, but to create a card that gave options for the class to take a slight shift in that direction. The resulting discussion of this card taught me a lot about what control hunter should and shouldn't look like, and the final version of this card reflects that.

Mechanics - Originally, this card was completely different. I think it was called Survival Guide and it was 3 mana - discover a spell and draw a card. I thought it was a neat little value package that gave hunter some way to get two cards from one without being too directly similar to everything else nor being a super-reliable card draw engine. Originally, people liked it, but then it was met with the inevitable criticism for trying too hard to push control hunter and not fitting in the class's identity. There was a lot of talk about whether or not hunter's class identity includes control, and whether it included card draw. I remember getting pretty angry at how relentlessly it felt like people wanted to make sure that hunter didn't get any card draw.

I later talked with Frostivus and he told me that this card doesn't work at *all* with hunter's current game plan because even in the control setting hunters are supposed to be proactive. When they do draw cards, it's by affecting the board at the same time. I liked this view - it didn't say hunter's couldn't have card draw, but it didn't say that you could just give them anything. It gave a good way to give hunters a value tool while still keeping the hunter-y feel. So I modified the card to give less value and impact the board more, which is the current (slightly strong) version.

Flavor - Once again, my goal was to capture the hunter fantasy. For this one, I imagined a skilled bowman firing off a shot, killing one enemy, and already having the next arrow drawn back before the other enemies have even realized what happened. I tinkered with the name for a while and came up with this.

Comments - This card might change to become a "Shot" card since armed and ready isn't the best name. There's decent potential to name it after the first shot in the fight that you plan to follow up with something else. We'll see.

The Big Game Hunt



Middle-Out - As you can probably already tell from looking at the card, the hunter rift is one of, if not the strangest, cards in the set. And as with most of the good rifts, it was designed with middle-out.

Mechanics - Rifts are excellent ways to reward players over time for making use of a certain mechanic. Given that I wanted to give a slower, removal-based hunter playstyle at least a small nudge in this expansion, I felt like making a rift that pushed the playstyle pretty hard was a reasonable way to go about doing that. (Sounding like a broken record, but) Once again, I wanted to base the rift in the hunter fantasy.

Flavor - I had been reading about a lot of notable hunters in trying to decide who would work best for the hunter legendary - hemet nesingwary, durotan, etc. Something that some of their stories contained which shockingly isn't really represented in the game yet is an actual Hunt, like a competition where two hunters try to conquer the most impressive collection of beasts.

Since the hunt and kill aspect of hunter is the one that ties best into control/removal, it seemed like a natural fit.

Mechanics - At first I wanted to make it so that the rift gave you a reward based on how many minions you killed. But then I realized that this was relatively uninteractive. So why not get the opponent in on the action and track their points too, and have the effect you get be based on the point difference? From there, the most intuitive effect that could happen from a point difference is changing stats by +1/+1 based on that difference.

Comments - People really seemed to receive this card well. However, people were saying that based on how irregular the effect was, that it should really be legendary. Initially - I was against this. It broke the symmetry that class rifts weren't legendary, and making this one legendary would kind of spit in the face of all the other classes that didn't get a legendary rift. But again, trying to focus on community feedback over my initial instincts, here were the reasons that won me over:

- 1) The effect is pretty deserving of a legendary, given how vague and "different" it is.
- 2) There's some tangential precedent of hunter getting weird stuff for legendaries, as in TGT.
- 3) My previous few attempts to create the hunter legendary didn't end very well, so this was an opportunity to get a "free" good legendary card.
- 4) It would be very strange for a non-legendary card to reward the legendary King Bangalash, and it would also be strange for it not to reward King Bangalash.
- 5) This rift is reasonably similar to simply being a legendary minion, as it's a big tiger that you get after a long delay.

As for visuals, I think that each player's point score would appear in the lower corners of the card, where the attack and health would be if this were a normal minion.

Sniper Rifle



Top-Down - After The Big Game Hunt got upgraded to a legendary, I did some rarity shifting and ended up with another slot for a low-rarity card. So I wanted to make a simple, flavorful card.

Flavor - Hunter ties into the time theme often via patience and waiting for the right moment. As far as weapons go, Hunter Rifles reflect this dynamic perfectly.

Mechanics - Hunter is a class that relies on being fast, and so creating a card that incentivizes them to wait is difficult. So, I decided to create a card that gave you a minor synergy opportunity for waiting, but the value of the card was frontloaded onto solid stats so that even if you didn't take advantage of the synergy you still got a decent card.

Weapons that have different attack values on each attack is an idea which I've recently gotten interested in, and I felt like a stronger second attack or a delay before the powerful attack was the best way to implement this effect. After a lot of tinkering around with numbers and making sure that the card was both considerable if you didn't wait but also rewarding if you did wait, I settled on 4/3/2 that becomes a 5 attack at the start of your next turn.

Comments - It feels somewhat odd for something like a sniper rifle to still cause you to take damage when you attack. But I guess it doesn't really make sense with any of the ranged weapons except for gladiator's longbow, anyway...

Traveling Trickster



Bottom-Up - I have a friend who is frequently Legend that mains hunter. He's interested in card design but is a beginner, this idea is inspired by one of his first well-formed card ideas.

Mechanics - My friend's inspiration for this card effect came from one of the suggestions to fixing the discover mechanic. There was the suggestion that opponents should be able to see discover options so that it was possible to play around what they chose, but Blizzard responded to this by saying that it wasn't very fun to know for certain whether or not your opponent discovered an answer to your play. We agreed, certainly it'd be a bit invasive if both players could see every discover. But what about using that as a one-off card where the discover choices are shown? Since this was in a discussion about secret hunter, we came up with the card "Discover a secret and play it, your opponent sees the options."

A few months later I'm designing a card or two for secret hunter, and I remember this old idea. Its main failure was the lack of good flavor, when suddenly

Flavor - Trying to find ways to tie an idea like this into the time set, I thought that using prehistoric dinosaur-type stuff was a good way to do that for minions. Dinosaurs and Mindgames often don't really go together too well - what kind of dinosaur is smart? Then I remembered the famous line "Clever Girl" from Jurassic Park, so I posted it with that name and people seemed to think it worked pretty well.

[Update]: Turns out, it didn't work pretty well. This card was targeted in the massive flavor overhaul where it looked like hunter had absolutely nothing to do with any of the expansion themes. I was originally trying to flavor this card along the lines of "Dimensional Trickster,"

someone who can bend reality to their will and uses it to mess with people, reflecting the mindgame nature of this effect. However there was no art even remotely close to fitting for this.

Comments - The 4 mana 6/3 statline works really well here. Technically, this card is really efficient value-wise since it's a minion which generates a spell. But for some reason I just couldn't help but feel like the effect was pretty weak when your opponent can see the choices, since the main thing that makes secrets fair at their lower mana cost was the fact that your opponent doesn't know what they are. So I wanted to give it a good statline to compensate. Making a body which had 9 stat points but making them distributed poorly solves this problem, making it a decently solid minion given that it generates a secret for you, without making it extremely overpowered.

Primal Scorpion



Bottom-Up - The Bestial Wrath forgotten card has been a long-time favorite idea of mine, so I started from there.

Mechanics - Bestial Wrath is a pretty clear choice for the forgotten card, since it does make use of a really cool mechanic and works really well in hunter's playstyle but because it's so likely to be a dead card, it sees pretty much zero play.

How this card would generate Bestial Wrath, though, was a pretty long discussion. Originally, the trigger was if a friendly Beast had died this turn, which fits the flavor very well as a "vengeance" theme. However, this had anti-synergy with the concept of Bestial Wrath and the hunter "make value trades" archetype. So I tinkered around with the mechanism with the

customHS discord for a while, and then we came up with this new condition, which perfectly synergizes with itself. Excellent.

Flavor - This card stays above the absolute garbage flavor threshold using alliteration. Beyond that, it was supposed to be a sort of prehistoric walrus from when they used to be giant. Flavor here is definitely lacking.

[Update]: Flavor here is hopefully no longer definitely lacking. With the desert thematic being thrown in this changed to a scorpion, bolstering the flavor of itself and the warrior weapon. Hey, they both even deal with being angry for even more extra decent flavor.

Comments - Phyley was a huge help coming up with the condition for this card. Many thanks.

Pulse Bomb



Bottom-Up - Started thinking about interesting hunter positioning-based removal, as that seems to be a nonzero theme in how their class approaches removal and AoE.

Mechanics - Setting up a board so that you can play your big spell and have a chain reaction clear everything is super satisfying. This type of carry-over damage came to me more or less all at once, though I tinkered with several versions of being able to target it or being unable to target it to see which one worked best and settled on this somewhat mechanically complicated one.

Flavor - Once again, really weak. It's several shots over a period of time, so, time... I'd like to change this name to something like "Rapidfire Barrage" to at least emphasize the sort of extremely quick succession.

Comments - I'm worried that this card has somewhat of a lack of decision from the enemy, as it always does the same total amount of damage regardless of positioning, and you can only really save one or two of your minions at most. It might get changed to dealing a large amount of damage to one minion, and then the overkill damage to adjacent ones.

[Update]: That happened, the card now does exactly that. At first I was trying to flavor it along something like "Realm Collapse" but it didn't really make sense as hunter. Maysick suggested pulse grenade which I changed to pulse bomb for the potential overwatch crossover. However, finding art of a magical/futuristic pulse bomb is surprisingly extremely difficult. Originally I wanted a picture of Tracer's pulse bomb specifically, but the only two are one where it's cut off beyond CAFability and one where it's far too small to work. So I looked around for general arts, and had absolutely no luck until I remembered I might be able to use heimerdinger's stun grenade to approximate it.

Mage: [Album](#)

Throughout the entire design process, I worked on the sets of cards class by class. Occasionally, I would design a card or two for a class ahead of the one I was currently working on due to a bout of inspiration, so by the time I made it to a new class I would usually have 1-3 cards done for it already.

This was not the case for mage. I had absolutely no pre-made mage card ideas coming into this set, and so I started from scratch on this round.

I'm pretty lucky in the mage set, since mages in WoW are actually preceded to have time-altering spells (chronomancy). I also had recently been playing some DnD and the concept of Metamagic, or magic that modifies your magic, seemed like it would work in the time set. I had used the "next time you cast a spell" mechanic in my Death Knight class, and it went pretty well. The only drawback to this mechanic is that it's a floaty effect that's hard to indicate to the player - they will often forget. However, I think the way to solve this floatiness is to create enough metamagic cards to justify implementing a new GUI effect for them, which then mitigates the floatiness of the effect itself.

My plans for creating a metamagic indicator would be to cause your spells to be covered in a very thick blue glow. You won't know immediately what exactly is modifying your spells, but even at a glance you can clearly see "this spell is not normal", which should remind you that you've

just played a metamagic card (and you'd be able to mouse over the card to see it being modified).

Mechanically this set explores these themes: One, metamagic (modifying next spell). Two, spell damage as a focus for bringing back some sort of tempo-mage type deck. Three - hang on a second. This set only has two themes. This is sort of accidental, I came up with a lot more spell damage and tempo mage cards than I had originally intended, but I really liked their designs, so I kept them instead of deleting them to encompass a broader set of themes. I feel like sticking to overly particular internal design rules isn't worth throwing away good ideas.

Temporal Anomaly



Bottom-Up - I was looking for ways to synergize with spell damage, in the vein of "deal 1 damage and do a thing for each damage dealt".

Mechanics - The general direction for this card's mechanics comes from a later card in the set called Temporal Flux, which deals 1 damage and then has a scaling effect based on the damage dealt. I liked how that card worked, scaling with spell damage without being ultra-blunt, so I wanted to make a second "Temporal" card.

I posed the question of another mechanic that could scale by damage dealt. The idea to do an x-cost minion was actually suggested by someone else, and I really liked it.

Flavor - Since this is a card that's going to be summoning something, I sort of imagined an unstable portal vibe where you perform a ritual and it's going to have completely unexpected results. Thus "Anomaly" was fitting here, and I think the mtg art conveys that a bit. Searching for a better name isn't out of the question.

Comments - This card is potentially worrying as it's a 1 mana mage spell that can deal damage to the enemy hero. It's no Ice Lance, but with spell damage shenanigans, it might be all that's needed. Hopefully it doesn't enable ridiculously unfair combos.

Metamagic



Top-Down - The concept of Metamagic was the inspiration for not just this card, but also a mage micromechanic in this set.

Flavor - Metamagic by definition in DnD is magic that, rather than doing anything on its own, modifies or enhances your next spell in some way. This can be increasing the range, making it more powerful, making it cast more quickly, etc. The names for each of the tokens was based off of the names for the various effects in DnD, with some modifications to be more appealing. I won't be including the images of the tokens here since they'd take up too much space, so go check them out in the album.

Mechanics: Given the name, I wanted this card to be the fundamental representation of the Metamagic mechanic. So it made sense for it to be a purely enhancing the next spell effect, rather than a minor effect with metamagic slapped on.

Originally, the card costed 2 mana and gave you a choice between three options. These three options were exactly the same every time - Costs (2) less, Deal 1 damage to all enemies, and deal 4 damage to a random enemy minion. I was pretty happy with this design for a while, but I eventually started having doubts. It felt boring. The costs (2) less effect was pretty much never

useful, so it'd be always using one of the two damage effect based on the situation. As a reward for the ability to bank mana, it always felt like you were spending it very inefficiently.

So I thought, what if we add some inconsistency? Instead of 3 options, I'd make 6 or 7 and make it a Discover effect, so you'd have to adapt to the current situation based on the board state and your spells that are available to use. After tinkering with a bunch of new effects, there were some really neat ones that were too weak if the card costed 2 mana. Given that the card was now inconsistent, I felt like I could justify reducing the cost and only slightly nerfing some of the effects.

In the final version, you always get net positive mana from using Metamagic. The thing is that the effect is inconsistent as you have a less than 50% chance to get a single particular effect and that you have to have another spell at the ready to redeem your value.

Comments - A potential issue with this card is that it has 7 unique tokens just for an epic. This is a lot to ask for a legendary, let alone one card! Depending on how interesting metamagic proves to be in playtesting, we'll see if it warrants keeping it. If the concern is art, I think it would actually be neat to use existing spell art for each effect. However, the burden of knowledge is undeniably large. But, you're not choosing from every possible effect at once so knowing all the options isn't as important, so it could be okay.

Kobold Chronomancer



Bottom-Up - The goal was to make another metamagic card, but a far less complex one to compliment the very involved Metamagic.

Mechanics - A mistake I made in my DK is that a lot of the “next time you cast a spell” effects were just generic effects with the spell condition slapped on. They didn’t gain anything from being metamagic effects, like “Next time you cast a spell, draw a card.”

So I vowed, for all the metamagic effects I make for this class, they need to be dynamic. It should feel like you are really *modifying* the spell you cast, as opposed to just “slapping a bonus onto a condition.” Spell Damage is one of the simplest possible dynamic effects for spells. Some spells don’t scale with it at all, others scale linearly, others get huge value. This straightforward design seemed like an excellent metamagic choice.

In addition to simply fulfilling the metamagic quota, this card also contributes some really nice interactions to the spell damage side. One of the biggest (intentional) weaknesses of Spell Damage is that minions with it almost universally die before anything fun can happen with them. I wanted to slightly increase the consistency of these fun things happening without just completely pulling out the stops on spell damage. Allowing for one guaranteed spell damage combo seemed like a fair balance. It also has some neat combos with cards like Volcanic potion to help clear these ever more sturdy aggro decks.

Flavor - The stats were set at 2/2 almost immediately. A 2/2 that also gives spell damage? The Kobold Geomancer reference was irresistible. And chronomancer just fit so well. The art doesn’t do an ultra-good job of conveying a mastery of time, but he looks majestic enough to pass.

Comments - I got into a rather heated debate with someone, who argued that this card was too weak. I strongly disagree because of how potentially powerful banking spell damage is. What do you guys think (not that anyone is down here on page 93).

Theramore's Fall



Top-Down - There didn't seem to be all that many super important mage events, although the infamous mana-bombing of Theramore seemed to be deeply connected to Jaina's story enough to use it as the Rift.

Flavor - Theramore was mana-bombed by Garrosh. Mana-bombs seem to be like the WoW equivalent of nukes, and as a byproduct they screw up the area of impact for a while, giving rise to unnatural creatures, (like Mana Wraiths, maybe).

Mechanics - I wanted to introduce a new "whenever you cast a spell, do something" effect, however it's hard to find effects that fit well there. Summoning tokens has already been done. But I had the idea, what if instead of just a generic token this card summons a specific minion? I asked the Discord what they thought, and MinorBug suggested I use Mana Wraith.

I thought this was really interesting because of how odd of an idea it struck me as. Mana Wraith is such an obscure neutral card that doesn't particularly tie into mage themes. But it ends up working so perfectly. It's a generic 2/2 token that slows down your opponent (a theme we're starting to see with doomed apprentice) without necessarily affecting you since, given that this card is in play, your board presence can be created by casting spells. Plus, the few experiences I've had with Mana Wraith in arena always end up with it being way more impactful than one might expect. It fit the flavor and so I went with it.

Comments - Apparently, I printed this card originally at 3 duration. After taking a break from this project for the beginning of college, I came back and was completely shocked by this, and nerfed it to 2 duration.

Temporal Flux



Bottom-Up - This is a slightly revised version of an older card idea.

Mechanics - As mentioned in Temporal Anomaly, this was the original “Temporal” card - something that scales really well with spell damage, but not because it’s a generic AoE spell. It’s below average at 0 spell damage, slightly above average at 1, and really, really good at 2. I think this is a decent curve for spell damage rewards.

Flavor - Time and card draw are already connected, so it’s only a question of why more spell damage gives you more card. With the name “Temporal Flux” it’s as if you’re bending time more so as to jump farther into the future, which makes sense.

Comments - In ICC, where this card is from originally, it was simply “Draw 1 card. This is affected by spell damage.” Frky pointed out that this was pretty clunky and suggested this deal-damage version instead. I said it was a good suggestion but turned it down in that context, however revisiting the idea for a spell-damage mage subtheme I decided he was right, plus, it gave me the opportunity to use the same motif on Temporal Anomaly.

Own Worst Enemy



Top-Down - Playing around with time-travel tropes, being confronted by yourself from an alternate reality isn't out of the question.

Flavor - As explained in the previous section, this card is supposed to tap into the "alternate reality" area of timey-wimey stuff. Own Worst Enemy is from an old name for You From the Future, and I think it applies here.

Mechanics - I had some inclination to make a mage secret since secrets seem to fit the general vibe of time and turn manipulation pretty well, so it was a question of how to best integrate a copying minion mechanic into a secret. This isn't too hard of a task and since I've always been a fan of noble sacrifice-esque cards I came up with this current idea pretty quickly.

Comments - I had some doubts as to whether or not this card was really well designed, so I posted it on the discord to see if people thought it had any merit, or else I'd scrap it. It turns out, not only did people think that this design was decent, but apparently a card that did [literally the exact same thing](#) had already garnered a few hundred karma. I know that some concepts are "customhs," very obvious synergy cards that people have done to death, but in this case I honestly thought I was making something new and was blown away to see it had been done literally exactly the same. To be fair, I think my art and name are slightly better.

Alodi



Top-Down - Originally the mage set was going to be more focused on early magic, the first guardians, etc, so I had decided pretty early on that the mage legendary would be Alodi, the first guardian.

Flavor - Time travel often correlates with bringing the legends of the past back into the fray, so using someone like the first ever guardian seemed like a reasonable choice. To put it simply, Alodi was the guy who turned the meme strat called spearheading into a very viable strat called being the guardian. This idea of being a vessel that collects the power of many people to form an extremely powerful mage is what fueled this card.

Mechanics - Gaining spell damage on spell cast is a pretty “obvious” thing to try to do, but I’ve generally stayed away from it because I realized how quickly it can get out of hand. Recently, I’ve been trying to confront ideas that I’ve stayed away from previously to see if there isn’t any way I can pull them off safely. At first, I thought, “certainly, this effect on a high cost minion would be impossible to abuse.” But after putting it on a 6-8 mana minion and realizing how absolutely garbage it was, I thought, well maybe I can lower the mana cost then, to something as low as 4.

At this point the card is a 4 mana 4/3. Its effect changes from “whenever” you cast a spell to “after,” since its kind of counterintuitive to change the damage of the spell mid-cast. At first I think, this card is OP, but hopefully not abusable. However, when actually looking at the value it generates you, I realize the opposite: This card is horribly weak.

Compare this card to its similarly statted counterpart, Frigid Snobold. It takes **four** spell casts for this spell-damage focused legendary in the strongest spell damage class to be better than one of the worst cards in the game, when total value is compared (don't even get me started on when you use evolved kobold).

# Spells Cast	Total Snobold Spell Damage	Total Alodi Spell Damage
1	+1	+0
2	+2	+1
3	+3	+3
4	+4	+6

FOUR spells. Most people are happy to get a single spell on a spell damage minion, let alone FOUR! There's a valid argument that alodi lets you frontload non-damaging spells, like for example double mirror image into a damaging spell gets you spell damage +2 from alodi, but only spell damage +1 from snobold. I don't think this difference occurs at a reasonable enough rate to be considerable.

Despite a surprising number of objections, I looked for ways to buff this card. There were essentially two routes. One, make the spell damage start higher, or two, give it better stats. In a sense, starting the spell damage higher would make the card better in combo decks, and better stats would improve its performance in tempo decks. This card was designed for tempo, so I changed its stats from 4/2/7 to 4/3/5.

Comments - I still think the card is abysmally weak although many people have voiced the exact opposite concern that it's far too strong. I'd lean towards making it a 4/2/7 but people have objected to that *extremely* strongly. Maybe it'll just end up staying weak to continue the trend of crappy mage legends.

Infinite Timereaver



Bottom-Up - Mage's final metamagic card.

Mechanics - Once again, I was looking for dynamic effects to put as metamagic. I came up with the idea of modifying your next spell to be mortal coil (since different spells may or may not kill things) before I came up with the actual minion, and so I slotted it onto a body that could be placed at a medium mana cost.

Flavor - Turning your spell into something that's fueled by killing sounded relatively corrupt for mage, which seemed like a good opportunity for me to use the infinite dragonflight in a class card, which I really haven't been doing.

Comments - Not much to say here. I like 5 mana 3/7s.

Arcane Arbiter



Bottom-Up - Mage's forgotten card, and by extension, the final forgotten card!

Mechanics - I knew that I wanted to use Arcane Explosion as mage's forgotten card. There was a time when I played an odd Dragon tempo mage, and I used enough spell damage to be able to run Arcane Explosion with a surprising degree of success. Getting one off with 2 spell damage is one of the most satisfying feelings you can get. This checks all the boxes for forgotten cards: Bad on their own, potential to be fun with synergy.

As for ways to go about generating arcane explosion, there were two main candidates. Firstly, this one. Secondly, a very complex metamagic variant something along the lines of "The next spell you cast is transformed into Arcane Explosion."

Getting the transform next spell to work proved to be very difficult - first of all, how to make it so that arcane explosion was actually fun to use in that scenario as opposed to just a downside? So we gave the main body Spell Damage +1. But then there was the issue of displaying it. It would have to preemptively transform all your spells into arcane explosion temporarily, since arcane explosion could have a different mana cost. But then it would be extremely inconvenient to remember what spells you still have in your hand, or even which spell you're getting rid of while it's an Arcane Explosion!

I had always been partial to the simple, 8 mana version. Again, I feel like a lot of forgotten cards have gotten unnecessarily complex. Just look at Ghastly Conjurer and how simple it is. In Arcane Arbiter, the "condition" in a sense is the fact that you're getting two arcane explosions on

turn 8. It's a challenge to the player - how can you make this useful? Run an elementals deck for this to be an 8 mana 6/8 lifesteal with a free consecrate attached? Maybe swap it into exodia mage for two out-of-deck spell procs? Or use it in a weird spell damage deck to get an AoE burst that could potentially outvalue flamestrike? This wealth of options for such a simple and, I think, neat card made me really want to print it. People have consistently rated it poorly with some exceptions, but given how much I like it (and how hard it would be to replace), I'm likely to keep it.

Flavor - Generating a card like Arcane Explosion is usually relegated to some sort of unstable source of power. So I imagined an entity drifting through time and space made out of "leftover" arcane energies, slowly forming together into a sentient arcane elemental. Originally the name was "Arcane Amalgamation" which reflected this concept quite nicely, but I couldn't find fitting art. So I ended up going with this somewhat similar removed-arcane-entity idea.

Comments - I actually was talking to my sister's friend to maybe commission a piece of art to use so I could change the name to arcane amalgamation or arcane arbiter, but it never really came together. If any of yall want to draw me something, <3

Neutrals: [Album](#)

Well, this is interesting. I created these sets and did most of their writeups before going to college. The neutral set I only came back to after taking a long break from card design to focus on school. I also finished the rest of the set during this stretch of work, and so the overall name/themes/flavor really changed quite a bit during this time period. The previous two sections started pointing at the fact that the cohesive flavor and storytelling of the set were lacking. However, after a somewhat rigorous flavor clean-up and re-evaluation of what the set is supposed to be about, it feels like it comes together much more nicely.

This is my first time attempting to create such a large volume of neutral cards and so I had some trouble in approaching it. My main strategy was to have several "subsets" of cards that followed a similar theme. For example, the five timewalkers, the cards that interact with mana cost, dragons, etc. In the writeups, as you'll see, several cards were made by being tied into these greater subthemes.

Timewalker Initiate



Middle-Out - This is the first of a small set of “Timewalker” cards. Obviously, for an expansion about the Caverns of Time, it seems like a good idea to make use of the surprisingly large amount of Timewalker art and make a bunch of timewalker cards. But it would be weird for all of these Timewalkers to have nothing in common, so I decided that each one should have a triggered effect, which is both flavorful with the expansion and has nice synergy with Chromie (or at least with Chromie’s current design at the time of writing) [Update: Chromie has since been changed, and it no longer synergizes with Chromie].

Flavor/Mechanics - I was going to design a handful of Timewalker cards by going through a pool of mana costs and finding a fitting design for that slot on the curve. Naturally, I started at 1 mana. Flavor-wise, 1 mana can easily be reflected as someone who is new/learning, so the general title of “Timewalker Initiate” came to mind pretty quickly. It makes sense for these student-flavored cards to get stronger over time, like Lowly Squire, and so I made the effect something that gives it increased stats. Finally, I made the trigger start of turn since that seemed like a reasonable way to do the over-time effect without getting too involved.

Comments - I feel like having the stats grow at the end of your turn provides for generally a more stable card, but this would require altering the base stats to 0/1 in order to be balanced, which feels very clunky and awkward, so I didn’t do it.

Call of the Crusade



Top-Down - The point in Wrath of the Lich king where Tirion unites the strongest adventurers to go on a crusade and defeat the Lich King is a pretty pivotal point in the game without in and of itself being the super climax (the Lich King / KoFT itself), so it felt fine as a common neutral rift.

Flavor/Mechanics - The nature of this event is like building an army, and so we have all sorts of commander-like effects at our disposal. I ended up choosing the adjacency attack buff, since it's an effect that can be interacted with by your opponent by clearing your minions without giving them a more direct path to interaction like many of the class rifts do. Three duration felt fair, as Dire Wolf Alpha's effect is relatively minor, even though this Rift does make it guaranteed.

Comments - This is the first neutral Rift, and these work a bit differently from the past class rifts. First of all, we see a wider spread of rarities. Neutral rifts can be common, and certainly can be legendary. Secondly, I feel like they will also be less interactive than class rifts, but still maintaining some interactivity from your opponent. While I do like the idea of making sure that rifts can be interacted with to avoid interactivity (obviously), I think there is merit to using rifts as effects that occur over a period of time that aren't designed to be interacted with, as that widens the possible number of designs for rifts.

Hypnotist



Bottom-Up - This effect was actually not suggested by me, but rather by user ThePixelDash from the customhearthstone discord. I was having a discussion about possible effects that can interact with a minion's mana cost, and this was immediately suggested and I immediately fell in love with its crazed-chemist-esque versatility.

Mechanics - Since the effect was essentially finished for me, the main mechanical aspect behind this card design was creating the stats. Based on the effect itself, it was inevitable that this minion had to have attack and health equal to its mana cost. Originally, I planned to make it a 2 mana 2/2 to mirror *Crazed Alchemist*, but we really wanted an effect as fun as this to see play and we thought it would have a greater shot of seeing play as a 1 mana 1/1 given the increased flexibility in stats.

Flavor - I wasn't quite sure how to do flavor for this card, but I did have this neat picture of a hypnotist lying around that I had downloaded since it included a stopwatch which was tangentially related to time. It seemed vaguely fitting and so I went with that - it was also an opportunity to get another 1-word name, which is something I'll grab at when I'm able.

Hands-On Historian



Bottom-Up - As I said in the intro to the neutrals, section, several of the cards in this set were designed to interact with Mana costs. I had the idea of interacting with cost of cards in hand a while back, and eventually decided to put it into action here.

Mechanics - For the “hand cost interaction” mechanic I realized there were essentially two ways to go about it: rewarding the player for having a hand costing above a certain amount (greed condition) and rewarding the player for having a hand costing below a certain amount (a condition similar to hunter’s empty hand condition). Notably, it wouldn’t work to have that threshold be static (ex, above 10 and below 10), since it de-emphasized the difference between the two.

I ended up choosing 5 as the threshold since I think this will be somewhat of a challenge for aggro decks. Experience with the empty hand condition tells me that it isn’t as trivial as you might think to rid your hand of cards. It would be boring if this card were just “Throw this in an aggro deck, and it always works” so I wanted to make sure that it was sufficiently difficult to achieve.

As for the reward, I’ve always wanted to provide some sort of meager neutral cycling. Every time I’ve proposed something like this, which has a low mana cost but can draw a card, people complain that it will be abused by aggro. But is this a terrible thing? Aggro is weak right now and could use some love, plus, I think a single card cycle isn’t at all gamebreaking.

Flavor - This card's flavor is relatively weak, but it was made at the point where I just had to get something out of the door. As you'll see on many of the other mana cost interaction cards, a low mana cost is intended to represent the past while a high mana cost is intended to represent the future. Thus, this card with a low-cost restriction should be themed on the past.

Card draw can be flavored as research, and I did have the idea of people who study the past like archeologists and historians going there directly to observe it first-hand. Hands-On Historian is a rather blunt way to convey this, with lorewalkers as historians, but it's good enough.

Timewalker Striker



Bottom-Up - It's a lorewalker, so it's based on those mechanics, but those mechanics are based on lore, so it's hard to say if it's middle-out or bottom-up.

Mechanics - Two cost minions seem to be bread-and butter for aggressive decks, so how about an aggressive card? Attacking is an aggro condition and gaining attack is an aggro reward, so the card came together with a 2 for every number pretty quickly.

Flavor - My source for timewalker names comes from the WoWTCG page on Timewalkers, which contains a surprising amount of variance in types. Turns out, Timewalkers range from Assassins to Necromancers. So, Timewalker striker is something that exists to some degree (or at least, is within *striking* distance of it).

Comments - Due to the specific wording of this effect, it will trigger during the attack, and so its first attack will deal 4 damage. It's hard to know if this is counterintuitive or interesting.

Paradox



Top-Down - In my attempt to include some time travel tropes in this expansion, Paradoxes seemed like things I couldn't forego.

Flavor - Paradoxes are somewhat hard to represent since in the most literal interpretation they completely defy logic and reason and break the game. So it's probably impossible to create a perfectly faithful representation. Instead, I decided to go with having paradox be something that is self-referential or self-destroying.

Mechanics - It's hard to describe how the concept of having an effect that bounces oneself came to my mind, but it did, and I felt like a 2 mana 3/3 with a drawback like this was a really interesting minion to have for arena purposes.

Comments - This is extremely off-topic, but I have nothing else to say for this comments section so I think I'll write it here. Paradox is vaguely related to Coliseum Manager in that they both have effects that return themselves to the hand. When TGT came out, I remember seeing a comic criticizing Blizzard's awful design choices for printing Coliseum Manager. "Why, in an expansion all about the inspire mechanic," it said, "would Blizzard print a card with a *drawback* attached to Inspire?" While Coliseum Manager is an awful card, it returns itself to your hand after making a value trade so that it can heal, and you can replay it as another body later. It wasn't intended to be a drawback, or else Blizzard clearly would not have given it vanilla stats. This comic really annoyed me in that respect. I like coliseum manager.

Feels good to get that off my chest.

Fifi Fizzlewarp



Bottom-Up - Boy, I had no idea I would ever find myself making this card. Textless minion synergy is something that I have always been a staunch opposer of in the design community. No matter how you go about it, it suffers from two issues: Minions that synergize with textless minions by definition aren't textless, which feel strange. Secondly, and most importantly, encouraging players to build decks out of minions that do as little as possible contributes to an overall necessarily more boring and bland play experience, inherent in the concept of a textless minion. So, when someone else posted a textless minion synergy card, I respectfully listed these two reasons why a textless synergy archetype simply doesn't work. A third user saw this, analyzed the problems with the archetype, and strove to create an effect which addressed them. I thought it would be impossible. But he found a way. I was blown away - not only did it solve the problems, I actually really liked this design.

Mechanics - So, the issue with textless minions is inherent in the fact that they are textless. So how did he address this problem? Simple - make them not textless! The original suggestion was a 3 mana minion with a battlecry that, if all your minions were textless, gave them all the effects of a random minion with the same mana cost. I really liked this foundation, but I felt it needed a few tweaks. First of all, it needed to be at the start of the game rather than a battlecry.

Depending on one specific card draw, not just for your deck to be powerful, but to be any fun at all to use, seemed like a really toxic design choice.

Secondly, I made the controversial decision of removing the “same mana cost” requirement. “But, won’t that make the RNG on this card incredibly high-variance? Isn’t high variance bad?” Yes, and yes. When I saw this card idea posted, I saw the opportunity to appeal to a niche audience. In making this card, I’m betting on it not being viable - if the all textless Fifi deck is competitive, then I have made a huge mistake. This is where the limitations on my testing resources (especially for a card like this) take a toll - I’d love to dispatch a focus group to do some tests and see if this card is indeed powerful. But my expectation is that this card is not competitive because of its unreliability. When it works, it *really works* (1 mana 2/2, battlecry deal 15 damage to the enemy hero) and when it doesn’t, it *really doesn’t* (all your minions are ancient watcher). But, for some people, this makes the card fun. It’s designed to be what Yogg should have been, in a sense - crazy RNG, somewhat hedged by the large number of repetitions (once on each minion in your deck) that will create hilarious games. Not everyone considers this fun, but the people who do, consider it *really* fun. I think it’s better to have a few cards that appeal really strongly to niche audiences in this way, as opposed to a huge swath of cards that don’t move people one way or another.

Flavor - For a crazy, wacky effect like this, we need a crazy, wacky character. Why not create our own crazy gnome? I happened to have art for a crazy gnome working with portals on-hand (duh) which was previously on a card that drew a rift from your deck. In an attempt to cut down on rift interactions, I removed that card and repurposed its art. As for the name, we tossed around portal-centric names that sounded crazy and settled on Fizzlewarp, Fifi.

Comments - In the case that this card is indeed too strong, I think my likely change is to remove the “all your minions must be textless” condition and re-implement the “same cost” requirement, to hedge the RNG to some degree. It now becomes more usable as a package with some textless minions in aggro decks, potentially, which isn’t really what I want, but it would be the fastest solution.

Dimensional Courier



Bottom-Up - Deck manipulation was planned to be a minor theme in the Time set, but deck manipulation is hard to make for Hearthstone since it's not a game that responds well to knowing exactly what you're going to draw all the time. This is one of the few deck manipulation cards in the set.

Mechanics - As I was thinking about how to do deck manipulation, I remembered an old card design that I was really happy with. A 3 mana minion with a Deathrattle that drew a 4 mana card from your deck. I just really liked the idea of being able to build around powerhouse 4-drops that are integral to your combo, and getting some really heavily discounted draw in return for the specificity. I like the mechanic of interacting with specific mana costs in general (and seeing from some of the new expansion cards) it seems like blizzard is somewhat fond of it too. So I thought of updating this design. Maybe the player was offered a choice of mana costs to draw from, but it was limited (discover a mana cost, draw a card with that cost, for example). Then the concept of interacting with minions on the board based on their mana cost came together, and the fusion was really cool.

Flavor - I envisioned drawing a card of the same cost as a friendly minion as sort of "delivering them their package." I thought a Courier who hopped through Dimensions to deliver stuff was a really nice concept, and I had the Zapping bird picture from the Deviantart GvG contest that I'd been waiting to use, so it came together.

Comments - The art I used I specifically know is called Zapping bird. It's one of my favorite art pieces of all time and has been the art candidate for so many cards. I really admire how effortlessly it creates the theme of someone stepping through dimensions to suit their needs. It's a pretty oddly specific concept, and normally you don't find art for stuff like that. Giving it to this one really shows how much I like this design.

Escape from Durnholde



Top-Down - This is another one of the original rifts in the caverns of time, and so it absolutely had to be included.

Flavor - In my mind, escape always suggests mobility, and mobility always suggests card draw, so I was looking at some sort of conditional neutral card draw rift. Specifically, in this escape, your goal is to make a diversion, so I was also looking at some sort of interaction with minions (diversions).

Mechanics - Well, I think I've already spelled it out pretty concretely from the flavor section, but it's going to be card draw that's dependent on you having minions. The "if you have any minions" condition might seem a bit easy, but after taking a tempo hit of 2 mana you'd be surprised how hard it can be to keep any minions alive. Plus, even if you do get both draws, it's 2 mana to draw 2 cards split over 3 turns, which is pretty bad even for a neutral source of card draw.

Comments - Something that I don't like about this card is the fact that its effect only triggers twice even though its duration is 3. The whole point of rifts, to make them intuitive, is that their effects tend to trigger at the end of the turn so that it's intuitive from looking at the card how

many times it will activate. Having a duration of 3 here is somewhat annoying when it only actually draws 2 cards. This prompted a re-evaluation of the way duration ticks down. Minorbug suggested a change, I was thinking about going through with it but the number of required changes was too great since so many cards were balanced around it ticking down at the end of the turn, so it stayed the same.

Novice Time Traveler



Bottom-Up - I wanted to create more simple cards that interacted with shuffling.

Mechanics - A card that can shuffle something good into your deck, but I was in the mood for something simple. The 2 mana 2/3 common that shuffled a legendary came to mind pretty quickly. I really liked this design after the fact, because new players could craft it easily and play around with having random legendaries, without it being something like Malchezaar which is “get a legendary to get more legendaries.”

Flavor - Shuffling is always tied strongly with time travel. The question is, why random? Why common? I had the idea of a new time traveler who can't get the time and place exactly right and ends up going to the wrong place or getting there only after getting lost. I like it.

Comments - The only thing keeping this from being one of my favorite simple designs is that it's a common card which generated a legendary, which is relatively unprecedented in terms of non legendary cards that generate a specific type of card.

Timewalker Mistweaver



Bottom-Up - Timewalker #3.

Mechanics - Ever since the first standard cycle, Blizzard has become extremely cautious about printing neutral healing. And rightfully so - giving all classes an unconditional heal does step on class identity pretty heavily. But I still think it's worthwhile printing conditional neutral healing, that may or may not be usable but opens up interesting potentially. That's what I endeavored to do on this card as well as another timewalker, especially since healing fits pretty naturally as a triggered effect.

As for coming up with the condition, I notice that there's a surprising lack of cards that trigger off of every card you play, so I made this one to explore that niche. That makes it slightly good in rogue too, and while I don't think rogue should have reliable healing, it might be interesting for them to get a little something they can tech in for combos.

Flavor - Based on how incredibly diverse timewalkers are, it seems like essentially any class can fit, so I flavor them as Timewalker + a subtype that reflects their effect. The two mechanics I have to work with here are "whenever you play a card," which is sort of rapid and roguelike, and healing, which is self-explanatory. Mistweaver came to mind for me, which, of the healing classes, seems like the one that would be the most rapid and ninjalike (the concept of weaving handsigns rapidly came to my mind).

Comments - There is not actually a Timewalker Mistweaver or even Timewalker Pandaren, but it seemed like a reasonable possibility (Hell, there's at least one Pandaren Death Knight). So, I took the timewalker symbol from Timewalker Striker's art and edited it onto a pretty widely-used Mistweaver art. It turned out reasonably well.

Yaungol Guardian



Bottom-Up - Another one of the mana-cost interaction cards.

Mechanics - I didn't specifically have a plan to have one card to interact with each mana Cost, but I did have the sense that I didn't want two cards to overlap in the mana cost they interacted with. I noticed the 1-Cost was unused and felt like it definitely deserved an interaction. Making it specifically an aggro tech was somewhat arbitrary, I had vaguely tinkered with the effect a while ago and wanted to revisit it.

My original version of this card was a 0/5 with Taunt, but people said i was overestimating the chances that the opponent had a 1 drop and that with 0 attack the card was super useless if it didn't hit anything. I didn't want to print yet another 3 mana 1/4 Taunt, and I was worried that a 3 mana 1/5 would be obviously OP. But people said it wasn't, and I soon came to realize that it wasn't as well - so I printed it as a 1/5.

Flavor - This one was a struggle. It was the final card in the set of cards on which I overhauled flavor. Originally, it was something vague and generic like "Timeless Warden." In reflavoring it, I

realized that I had completely neglected the Timeless Isle. My goal was to have a creature which would immediately be correlated with the Timeless Isles from WoW. Problem: I've never played Timeless Isles. So I actually went into the WoW Discord and asked: People who played Timeless Isles, what's a distinctive type of enemy? The response was Gulp Frogs, which actually works pretty well with the flavor of the effect (swallowing a 1-cost minion whole). However, to a non-WoW player, it makes absolutely no sense why a frog would be related to time travel. I tried various name alterations, Timeless Toad and the like, but then it was no longer recognizable as the Frogs from Timeless isles. I ended up switching to the Yaungols because they are ancestors of the Tauren, which is already inherently related to Time travel even without the Timeless Isles flavor.

Comments - Not sure if I said this on the Forgotten Yaungol writeup, but Yaungol art is really hard to find. The picture I used is of a Tauren, I was just hoping that the image was frantic enough to mask that difference.

Shifting Sands



Bottom-Up - An early focus on end-of-turn effects from the beginning of the time set produced this card.

Mechanics - I was thinking about interesting things to put on an end of turn trigger, and the old design of swapping stats back and forth came to mind. There were also plans to have another

neutral adjacency attack buffing rift (which stayed, but in a weaker form) which has cool interactions with this.

Flavor - Here's where I established the beginnings of the fact that the Time set can also be flavored off of sand/desert themes, which would come back to "save the set" to some degree later. I found some really sweet sand elemental art which perfectly fit what I was going for, and went with it.

Comments - Fun fact: Phyley, known for making so many amazing rager cards, had a card called Tsunderager with the same effect, stat line, and cost (it was mage-specific, though) as part of her tsundere/yandere/dandere cycle of ragers.

Parallel Protector



Bottom-Up - Another vestige of early thematics, I was aiming at having a focus on spell-heavy deck synergy.

Mechanics - A deck with a lot of spells and few minions would likely struggle against aggro in the early turns, and so a hefty taunt seemed like a reasonable tool to give them. This would prove to make the flavor difficult.

Flavor - I think my struggle to get good flavor with this card teaches an important lesson about flavor. Originally, I prioritized the flavor of the card matching what the card did more than I prioritized the card fitting into the expansion. The name was something along the lines of

“Enlightened Enforcer,” which had alliteration and all and made some sense contained in itself, but in the context of the expansion is was a complete mystery as to what it was doing there.

It got targeted in the large flavor rework, and I realized that with other weaker flavor cards that Blizzard has printed, it’s better to prioritize the card relating to the set than it is to prioritize it relating to its own effect, to an extent. Even the cards that don’t have great flavor in recent expansions “fit” in their respective worlds. So this card got changed to be one about a parallel world, after seeing that there was available art.

Comments - For those who don’t get the art, Taurens can’t be Alliance normally, so this is like an alternate universe where Taurens are in the alliance.

Battle for Mount Hyjal



Top-down - I wanted to capture the flavor of an epic battle of several people against a common foe into a rift, just like how Archimonde was defeated in this battle by a ton of wisps.

Flavor - The aforementioned “come together to defeat the big boss” works really well with token synergy, and even *better* when you pay for that token synergy by summoning a big Demon for your opponent to make the Rift interactive. This idea came to me more or less in a flash, but when I saw how well it worked I really liked it.

Mechanics - All that’s left here is to clarify the balance. I think this card ends up being far on the weak side since 3 turns of buffs is probably roughly equal to giving your opponent the 8/8, but

that means there's some neat stuff you can do to try to make it better. Warlocks can run sacrificial pact to kill the demon, token druids that would especially like this buff can use the new naturalize card, deathrattle-heavy decks can sacrifice their weaker deathrattle minions to clear the big guy and get a stronger board,

Comments - Unfortunately, this rift can't summon Archimonde because then it would have to be legendary and this rift is definitely not designed to be legendary, so it summons a generic 8/8 demon.

Mrrrine



Top-down - I was thinking about ways that I could branch into other franchises and wanted to make more cards along that subtle crossover vein.

Flavor - The pun came to me when I was thinking about starcraft crossovers, and when I saw that there was surprisingly fitting art, I knew that I could make a card based off of this joke.

Mechanics - Murloc Marine is obviously going to have firepower which is best reflected as dealing damage. I tied it to a reasonable murloc condition and played around with stat lines until I found this one, which seemed about right.

Comments - The triple r is based off of the precedent set by Brrrloc. I would have done two myself, but I'll honor my Blizzard tradition this time.

Servant of Twilight



Bottom-Up - This was part of the “design dragon synergy” spurt.

Mechanics - There was a nice-looking spot on the neutrals curve for a 3-drop, and a nice-looking spot in the set themes for more dragon synergy. I thought of effects that I can attach to dragon synergy, and the first one that came to mind was “draw a card” (I actually love this effect and will almost certainly use it in the future) but the issue is that there’s already too much neutral card draw in this set to justify that. I thought around to other effects, and eventually settled on the 1-damage AoE because I really like 1-damage AoE and it could be tied into the more evil side of dragon synergy which I feel is a bit underexplored.

Flavor - As I just mentioned, the time set deals with the Infinite Dragonflight, and tangentially the Twilight Dragonflight, who are pretty evil. I aimed to have this synergy person be directly related to those, and the name came out of that pretty straightforwardly.

Comments - The recently revealed priest dragon overshadows this card quite a bit in terms of AoE rewards for having dragons... oh well...

Timewalker Stormlord



Bottom-Up - This is another Timewalker and so it's bottom up like the rest of them, but it came later on in the process.

Mechanics - Originally I had sort of run out of ideas for interesting Timewalker triggers but when I revisited the neutral cycle after taking the break for college I thought about on card draw which had pretty neat synergy with the higher-than-average amount of card draw printed in this expansion. So I made that a trigger, put on random damage since damage is one of the best incentives to do combos, and printed the card with a durable statline.

Flavor - Originally this card was the Timewalker Enforcer, dealing out blows of 3 damage, but it wasn't a very good fit. But I kept it (for whatever reason) until later realizing that not only did I have amazing art for Timewalker Stormlord but that it was a way better fit for the effect.

Comments - This card being called Enforcer actually prompted me originally to re-evaluate Enlightened Enforcer (Parallel Protector)'s flavor, but that ended in this card becoming Stormlord and Enlightened Enforcer going unchanged until later.

Tauren Primalist



Bottom-Up - This one's an old one that came when I realized the possibility of putting cards directly on top of your deck.

Mechanics - After making Consortium Smuggler, and seeing that a subtheme was supposedly deck manipulation, making another card that interacted with the top of your deck in this way seemed like it'd be cool. It made most sense to discover a spell as that puts most tension onto "okay I discovered the answer I need to this situation, but I have to survive till next turn to use it" since spells are most likely to be your outs. Stats felt balanced at inefficient vanilla because of how putting a semirandom card on the top of your deck has potential to harm you.

Flavor - Going with the theme of some of the very first people to pick up magic when it's not fully formed or stable (spell goes to top of deck instead of hand), Tauren were some of the first people to learn magic/shamanism and so the name primalist is supposed to reflect that.

Comments - There's a chance I can re-flavor this card to be similar to Novice Time Traveler but I'm not sure if I have the time. No guarantees.

Tetradimensionalist



Bottom-Up - Another card in the mana cost interactions group.

Mechanics - I've always liked the concept of token decks that have a bunch of early game buffs, but aggro decks like token druid have gotten to the point where buffs cause their minions to spiral out of control in terms of buffs and can't be feasibly cleared anymore. This card is sort of meant to help with that, as well as serving as an interesting tech card for things like cheap deathrattles, spreading plague and tar creeper, ancient watcher and humongous razorleaf, etc.

I usually like including a silence card in my expansions and I thought that fusing it with the mana cost restriction was an interesting way to do that. It might float in and out of the meta as there are more and less relevant cards costing 3 or less mana, which I think is a nice state for cards to exist in.

Flavor - This was a third card to get hit by the big flavor rework, and it ended up in an... interesting spot.

Originally, this card was called "Arrogant Scholar". Really flavorful for its effect, I feel like, but once again, completely unrelated to this expansion. First, it got reworked to a sort of middle-of-the-road spot, calling it Retrospective Cynic. It was supposed to embody someone who time traveled back from the future and was condescending about how drab present day is, and it didn't really accomplish that at all. So it got marked for a second flavor rework. In thinking about the three main possible ties for it (time travel, dimensional travel, desert) I was on the dimensional part and realized we had never done a higher dimensional or 4D being. It makes sense that a 4D being would be super condescending to a 3D one, which actually fits the

numerical flavor of the card (costs 4 mana, silences 3 or less) perfectly. The card was actually changed from a 4 mana 5/3 to a 4/4/4 for the bigger flavor opportunity. The name came as a cooperative effort between me and a few others, one suggested Extradimensional Elder, I changed it to Extradimensionalist, they finalized it with Tetradsdimensionalist, the long name made to emphasize how pedestrian those lower dimensional plebeians are. Maysick also found some wacky but somewhat coherent 4th dimensional being art (or at least how one might sort of appear to a lower-level being).

Comments - I thought my flavor was a clever solution, but it was critiqued by a particular Discord member as being the worst flavor he'd ever seen and that I should throw out the card if that was the best I could do. We'll see how people react.

Ravaging of Outland



Bottom-Up - This card was designed a long time ago with this effect, then flavor was reworked.

Mechanics - This is one of the earliest rifts in the set. It has a symmetrical effect which is interactive in some sense but not as directly interactive as some of the later rifts. The effect came to me just as I was playing around with the possible effects one can put on a rift, and this is one of the few early creations that stuck till the end. As for balance, 3 damage to all minions is worth roughly 5 mana, increased by a bit for being neutral and heavily decreased for being so slow, so I ended up with 4.

Flavor - Originally this card was The Sundering, after how the entire world got pretty rattled, but once Shaman's rift became the Maelstrom they were too similar to have them both, so I

changed this one to outland in line with Warlock's set theme. Outland has also gone through some rough stuff, so I think the flavor carries over.

Comments - Originally this card was an epic, with the same effect, but costing 3 mana. It felt less epic than the other rifts and so was changed.

Defender of Tomorrow



Bottom-Up - The compliment to Hands-On Historian, this was the high-cost card in the hand cost set.

Mechanics - I already discussed the basics of this mechanic in the previous section of Hands-On Historian, but essentially giving a big taunt is the natural reward for a slow deck that's playing especially greedy.

Flavor - Again, as previously explained, high-cost is being flavored as the future for the purposes of this set. "Defender of Tomorrow" was the first name that came to mind, but I was worried that it was a bit generic and that I'd seen it before somewhere. After realizing that I had seen it on Jayce, and seeing this particular Jayce skin, I felt like I might as well double down and throw in a league reference, since this isn't an official set.

Comments - At some point while sharing this card, I accidentally typed it as "Costs (2) or more" instead of "Costs (20) or more" and was taken aback as to why people were criticizing this card for being super op and an anti-mechanic until I realized.

Gracious Timekeeper



Bottom-Up - Another card interacting with a specific Mana Cost. I know I mentioned earlier a rule about not interacting with the same Cost twice, but that was never a super serious thing.

Mechanics - My thought process behind this card is maybe a bit questionable. Originally, after designing Vindicator Maraad, I thought, "As long as I don't print something stupid like, 'Your 1-Cost cards cost (0)', then this design should be fine." So naturally, I did exactly that and printed that card.

I wanted Maraad to be somewhat exciting but he's actually somewhat weaker than I thought, so I wanted to print a card that could cause some really crazy combos if your opponent was silly enough to let either of these two things live for a turn.

Flavor - I had recently picked up a generic artwork of a bronze dragon in human form holding an hourglass that was an indispensable resource working on this expansion. I used it and gave it the name Gracious Timekeeper, in the sense of someone who controls the rifts but allows minor shifts in regulation (like an extra 1-cost card here or there) out of the kindness of her heart. Kind of odd, but it works well enough.

Comments - To clarify, 1-Cost cards means that the card originally costed 1 mana, not that its current cost is (1). It's similar to how a "Deathrattle minion" is a minion that originally had a

deathrattle whereas “A minion with Deathrattle” just applies to any minion that has a Deathrattle effect.

Seeker of Knowledge



Bottom-Up - The complement to Parallel Protector, another card to synergize with spell-heavy decks.

Mechanics - This one gives us a draw engine, since spell-heavy decks are likely to need to constantly be using spells to one-for-one their opponent's resources. It's a mini Roll the Bones for spells, that only repeats once on success. It's also a pretty simple and tasteful effect that captures the full spectrum of spell-heavy designs instead of being absolutely working with all-spells decks and doing nothing otherwise.

Flavor - Originally the name of this card was quite simply “Spellseeker,” but that was originally blunt. Also, the art that I used for it got repurposed to Taunka Frostcaller, so I had to find something new anyway. I'm a big fan of the piece that I found and made some minor tweaks, to a guy searching through the knowledge from all across time for the information he needs.

Comments - Not sure if this card's RNG is too polarizing or if it's reliably rewarding enough for spell-heavy decks to see play. Requires some moderate playtesting, I think.

Chromie



[Mechanical Comment]: For those wondering how Chromie's effect handles a deck with more than 10 cards, it burns the extra cards so you're left with 10. There - I've spared you from having to read the fanatical ravings that comprise this card's writeup.

Inside-Out - It's 4 AM. I'm exhausted from writing all of these writeups. I've arrived at the final card created for the set which I no longer have the time to change. It's a crazy design. But I claim to have made it with a new design strategy, one that isn't top-down or bottom up. Am I going crazy, or did this happen?

Chromie's effect definitely wasn't inspired by a need to create this exact effect in the game. The only thing Chromie's flavor had to do with this card's creation is that it made it clear to me what I wanted to do.

Chromie's a character who is pretty whimsical when it comes to time travel. She can do some crazy stuff and laugh while doing so. In building this card, I wanted to evoke that emotion. That's why I'm calling this design **Inside-Out**. I wanted something from inside the game to create a specific emotional state in the player just by looking at it or seeing it happen.

What does this entail for Chromie? A simple but shockingly crazy effect. Something like "Take an extra turn" where you drop every Johnny player's jaw immediately with just 4 words. I don't know exactly how it hit me, but it did: Swap your hand and deck. The game is suddenly a crazy battle for survival. There's some synergy opportunities with other cards, but it is designed along the same vein as Archbishop Benedictus: Synergy or not, playable or not, you look at this card,

and think “jesus christ, this card is insane.” Getting that kind of kick out of players I think is important.

The specific stats were put at a pretty safe 4 mana 2/2, so it’s within reach of aggro decks but only if they’re willing to throw away a high-tempo turn and also risk running out of steam very early.

Timewalker Necrolyte



Bottom-Up - This is another older design, from my previous expansion I believe.

Mechanics - Hunter shouldn’t be given direct healing, it’s just not hunter-like. In addition, I don’t think giving their class specifically indirect healing like lifesteal or triggered healing is really fitting of their class. So how can we open up having even a sliver of hope for a slower hunter deck to exist? By printing a neutral conditional healing card that plays into an archetype they can use. I’ve always thought that the interaction between tokens and healing was really interesting as you have to build your deck in a pretty particular way to make it work, which is always a refreshing type of card to have. I bumped up the healing to a bit higher than it was, to reward the players who can utilize this card a bit better.

Flavor - Originally, this card’s flavor was laughably bad: Timeval’kyr, an attempted pun on “Timewalker Val’kyr.” I wasn’t really sure what kind of entity that made nonzero sense would heal on friendly minions dying other than that... yeah. I came back later in the timewalker flavor updates and realized that there’s a Timewalker Necrolyte in the TCG, which makes far more sense in both directions and has a really good piece of art available.

Comments - In reality, this is a card inspired by a card inspired by a card. The previous design, 5 mana 3/6 that heals for 3 whenever a friendly minion dies, was previously inspired from my Bard class, which had a 5 mana 3/6 which healed for 3 whenever a friendly minion was played.

Rafaam, Archivist



Bottom-Up - This is one of the earliest cards I created because I had an idea for a crazy effect, but one of the last that I got to do a writeup for. There are so many questions that I've needed to answer and now I finally get to do this. Oh man, I've been waiting for this for a while.

Mechanics - The Time set has always been about leaning towards abilities that warp how the game works. I'm also generally a pretty conservative designer that rails against this type of stuff. So, in order to push myself, I decided to become what I criticized and make something that messes with the fundamental rules of the game. The result may or may not be a card that fits the game's mechanics very well, but the primary goal was to push myself into my discomfort zone and see if I could deliver a card that people liked.

The effect comes from thinking about one of the most basic extrapolations of dimension-bending in Hearthstone. Using resources from a different place fits this theme very well, like how Ysera's original wording captured the flavor of "drawing from some otherworldly deck." I drew on this same theme of drawing from a deck that's "somewhere else," that place being your collection (with the caveat being that you discover instead of draw). No card has done anything like this before.

There are quite a few potential uses for this card which is what I think make its mechanics so interesting:

- 1) Run a deck consisting of tech cards that aren't good enough on their own and use Rafaam to adapt roughly to the current situation.
- 2) Run a deck consisting of super high-synergy cards for another class, for example a lot of mage and rogue spells are pretty strong in each others' classes.
- 3) Run a deck consisting of types of effects that your class doesn't have access to, like getting paladin's healing in Warlock (or, control hunter finally viable).
- 4) Name your own deck "The Supreme Archive" to do a shadow-visions-esque effect on your starting deck.

An important aspect of this card though, is that it's semi random and you have a roughly 30% chance to get a specific card that you want. This means that we're not suddenly breaking the barriers between classes and letting any class get a hold of any card, you only get one copy of one card from one other class and it's not guaranteed that you'll get the one that you need.

I think that this card is balanced at a 5 mana 5/5, because a legendary minion that Discovers a single card is not super viable on its own and this card depends on some really insane synergy to see play.

I'll also take the time here to put the rules for exactly how Rafaam's effect works, since there are probably a lot of people wondering. The amount of "Hidden Rules" here might be intimidating, but I promise that they actually make the card function more intuitively.

- Rafaam **cannot** be drafted in arena, because like C'thun and his followers, he requires specific deck setup to make full usage of.
- A "valid deck" means that a) it contains 30 cards and b) that it is in the correct format (standard or wild).
- If you have multiple decks named "The Supreme Archive," Rafaam discovers from just one of them according to the priority explained below.
- Rafaam will search for a deck called "The Supreme Archive" starting from the position of the deck slot that he's currently in. If the current deck is called The Supreme Archive, it checks there first, otherwise it moves down the list until it hits the bottom of your collection (or if it hits a wild deck when played in standard). Then, it wraps around to the top.
- If Rafaam wraps around to the current deck without finding anything, the effect poofs. Rafaam will have a yellow outline if a deck is correctly named, so you'll know if he's going to work or not.
- Various exceptions would be made to the exact name "The Supreme Archive" to catch spelling mistakes. Case insensitive, space insensitive, maybe a few common misspellings have exceptions, etc. Think like the store from LoL where so many different terms will find the same item.

The purpose of the odd way that Rafaam searches for decks is to make it easy for players to use Rafaam in multiple decks, each with their own Archive. By placing the Archive directly below a deck, you guarantee that the one right above it will use it, and nothing else will. By placing a single archive beneath a group of decks, you can have them all draw from the same archive. This avoids the absolutely awful potential struggle of having to switch out your archive decklist every time you made a new deck. This also assumes that we get click-and-drag to move around our deck slots, because that's a feature that we really should have in general beyond just making Rafaam more elegant.

Flavor - I had the image of some guy who hops through space and time, collecting (stealing) the very best of the artifacts he finds. This immediately fit what Ethereals do, and it's about time that one of our favorite characters makes his return. As for the subtitle, it was supposed to emulate "guy who stashes a bunch of stuff" but in a classy, organized-ish way, hence "Archivist."

Comments - The exact stats of this card have shifted a lot. It started as a 4 mana 4/4, then a 7 mana 7/7, then a 7 mana 6/6, then a 6 mana 4/5, then a 6 mana 5/5, then finally a 5 mana 5/5, and suddenly I'm getting the urge to bump it back to a 6 mana 5/5 again, to ensure that this card isn't an autoinclude since it is somewhat of a hassle.

Infinite Behemoth



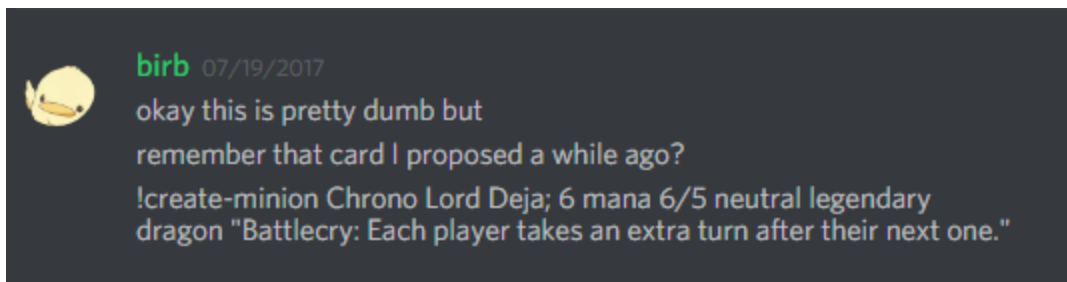
Bottom-Up - You can't have a time expansion without a card that gives someone an extra turn.

Mechanics - How to implement an extra turn? I think that, having it be Time Warp where you are the only one who gets an extra turn is going to be impossible to be fair. So it should either give it to both players, or your opponent. Once again, I thought that it would be safer to avoid giving

yourself an extra turn, so this card's design only gives your opponent the extra turn. It gains a pretty big stat buff in return (5 mana above par), since you're giving their minions an opportunity to attack twice, any new minions they play charge, doubling their mana, and giving them an extra card draw. The reason I specifically made sure to give this card taunt as opposed to just large stats is so that you actually have some hope of not immediately losing the game to your opponent getting double turns, since they have to work their way through this big minion first.

Flavor - It makes sense for something that bends time to this degree to be a member of the Infinite Dragonflight. Originally this card's name was "Infinite Dragonspawn," but that was a laughably generic title for an expansion that's supposed to have a bunch of members of the flight. Eventually, a token for an older version of Aeonus forced me to change this card and I never changed it back.

Comments - Not entirely related to this card's design specifically, but I did have a second nostradamus for Kobolds and Catacombs beyond just Grumble. Very early on in the expansion, I was planning on having Chrono Lord Epoch and Chrono Lord Deja as complementary legendaries. Epoch's effect was "Each player skips their next turn" and Deja was "Each player takes an extra turn after their next one," so your opponent would get two turns and then you'd get two. Funnily enough, I was told to scrap these two since Deja was too anti-fun, essentially an ultimatum of "If your deck which isn't optimized to win with a double turn can win, then you win, otherwise, you instantly lose." So it was pretty funny to see Blizzard come around and print that exact same design. Admittedly, they made it priest-only which is significantly less anti-fun since it keeps it out of the hands of especially notorious combo classes. Anyway, here's screenshot evidence:



Beholder of the Beginning



Bottom-Up - I wanted to make cards in the Time set that gave information to your opponent, and while this card doesn't directly do that, it was inspired by a set of cards that interacted with Mana Cost of the cards in your hand to do something along those lines.

Mechanics/Flavor - This card was designed after Emissary of the End, which you'll see later, as its natural complement. Literally just taking the inverse of most of the factors of that card and then tweaking them until this card made sense as a standalone. Even the flavor, as you can see, is the inverse of Emissary of the End with the title changed to maintain alliteration.

Comments - At the very last minute, I made a set of several changes that straightened out a ton of problems, as you'll see on the entry to Emissary of the End. Essentially, right before these changes, EotE used to cost (5) mana, this card used to cost (6) and could target face. I realized in the shower that there was a pretty degenerate rogue combo if this card could hit face, but that if I limited it to minions, it felt so weak. So, swapping their mana costs, limiting it to minions only, and tweaking some numbers actually fixed a lot of problems with both cards. But, since I switched these two cards' positions in between their writeups, a lot of the information about the general design process was front loaded onto Emissary of the End which is now later on in the document. Well, at least the beginning finally comes before the end in terms of mana cost!

Bronze Warden



Bottom-Up - Came as the result of a brainstorming session on creating more effects to trigger off of holding a dragon.

Mechanics - When I stumbled upon the concept of using the "Holding a Dragon" trigger to buff friendly minions, I really liked it. While Blizzard wants to shift dragon priest towards being control oriented, I'm not sure if the same can necessarily be said about all the other dragon archetypes. There's quite a bit of foundation for Dragon rewards to give you instant tempo in order to fight back against faster decks so you can survive long enough to drop your big guys. This card has the double condition of requiring a dragon and a living friendly minion, but the payoff is pretty insane if done right.

As for numbers, I wanted to make sure that the buff was really impactful for a 5-drop, so I favored +3/+3 over +2/+2 (also wanting to keep the buff symmetrical). Any statline lower than 4/4 just felt really awkward for a 5-Cost dragon, and I think the double condition was enough to justify the total of 7/7 stats on a 5-drop. Numerically this is 1.5 mana above average, so I think the dragon condition + requiring a friendly minion puts it at least within the margin of fairness if not exactly at par value.

Flavor - Went for something pretty generic here, as I had recently removed the only other neutral bronze dragon from the set and wanted to make sure I got one back in. Luckily, I found some nice-looking bronze dragon art that I hadn't seen before, since all the bronze dragon art I'd seen up to that point looked really bad with the exception of the ones that were straight up nozdormu.

Comments - People have said that this card is going to be insane but I disagree. They compared it to being slightly stronger than blackwing corruptor, and blackwing corruptor was very good. But, the power curve for hearthstone as increased since then, and corruptor didn't have the hidden second condition of needing to control a friendly minion.

Naga Timeweaver



Bottom-Up - Another specific cost interaction card.

Mechanics - The original concept of this card came from me remembering my struggles playing wild as renolock and always having so many good 6-drops to choose from but never being able to play two of them in the same turn because of how 6-drop costs overlap. Sylvanas, Siphon Soul, Reno Jackson, etc. So I wanted to make a legendary minion that turned all your 6-Cost minions to (0) cost until the end of the turn, because I knew firsthand that there were a lot of interesting 6-drops that you could throw in a deck to combo with it.

It came under criticism, and after a medium length discussion with Minorbug about what constitutes polarized RNG and how much dependency on a specific card becomes toxic, and I scrapped the design.

I revisited it as a 5 mana 5/5 with the card's current effect later, in the phase after Happy Ghoul was printed where I mistakenly thought that tempo that required you to pour your hand out was actually not that strong. It immediately got criticized as OP and so I abandoned the idea once again.

Finally, I had the revolutionary idea: What if... I nerfed the stats instead of scrapping the entire card? Brilliant, I know. So we made it a 5 mana 4/3, though it could feasibly go down to a 5 mana 3/3.

Flavor - I really didn't know where to go with flavor for this card but thankfully the discord helped me out. They noted the connection between Nagas and 5-Cost cards thanks to the precedent of Naga Sea Witch. I wasn't quite sure how I could connect Nagas to anything remotely related to time, but when I stumbled across this art, I thought, "I don't really know what Timeweaving entails, but if anyone's Timeweaving, this Naga is."

Comments - Along this design process I realized that I significantly undervalued tempo that requires multiple card combos to use. Even in this final, nerfed state, I think I might be undervaluing it and need to nerf it further.

Aeonus



Bottom-Up - The idea of a minion that revolves around a deck containing mostly or only spells has fascinated me ever since Yogg n' Load, and so I thought I'd put a few build-around cards into this expansion. This legendary is the crowning gem of that deck concept.

Mechanics - The design process for this card took quite a while and encountered a lot of controversy.

The very first version of the "all spells" legendary was Kalecgos - a 5 mana 5/5, who transformed into his Dragon form if your deck only contained spells. His dragon form was an 8/8 with the insane ability of summoning a random Dragon whenever you cast a spell. This quickly became one of my worst-received designs of all time, made no better by the fact that I stubbornly defended it as a good design despite a barrage of criticism in all directions from the discord. No surprise, I ended up scrapping it, and rightfully so. There were problems with the

card, but moreover, Frostivus (one of, if not *the*, greatest voices in fan card design) expressed that he thought an “all spells” legendary wouldn’t work the way I was trying to implement it.

I had given up on the idea for a while, but then I saw a 10 mana Paladin spell on the subreddit that filled your board with random legendaries if your deck only contained spells. Frostivus told me, that was an example of how to make the all spells condition work. So once again, I endeavored to create an all spells legendary.

I believe the next design I created was one that, instead of forcing every card in your deck to be a spell, simply removed all minions from your deck. This posed several advantages to forcing the player to have all spells: The card became much more flexible, and feasible to include the neutral minions that synergized with having a lot of spells. It also let you use weapons, and take advantage of the new Rift mechanic. No longer did you have to have 29 spells and 1 minion - you could run a handful of minions, as well as other types of cards. However, the reward for this condition was something along the lines of drawing a bunch of cards or duplicating your hand, neither of which was received very well.

For a moment, I was tempted by the Kalecgos design again. Transforming into dragon form if you had all spells was such an elegant condition, and based on the fact that a higher mana cost did “double damage” to the card (giving you less mana to to work with, forcing it to wait till hard removal is more common before popping out, being a less mana-efficient body), I thought I could make it work. But the flexibility on destroying minions was just so much better than forcing the player to only have spells.

So now, we’re not designing an “all spells” legendary anymore, but rather a “mostly spells” or “spell-heavy” legendary. I felt like the most fitting reward for this condition was something that gave you some proactivity on the board (so that your opponent has something to use their removal on, making the spell deck more interactive). However, if it just dumped a bunch of board dominance all at once, not only did it make the card useless because your opponent could easily use the AoE that they had saved up to instantly negate your trump card. It would have to give you value over time, but what was an interesting way to do that?

The answer was obvious: A Rift. This wasn’t your typical rift, it was a token generated in order to have an effect that takes place over several turns. But what’s wrong with that? That is essentially my exact goal with Rifts in the first place, and now I could use that very identity as the core of this card.

Next, I had to decide what exactly the rift would do. I wanted the value to be loaded towards the end duration of the rift, so you couldn’t just run it in an aggro or midrange deck and play it for a sudden burst of tempo to finish off your opponent. Yet, “summon a larger and larger man” was criticized as too similar to Jade in every variation.

A version that stuck for a while was having 4 unique tokens of increasing strength that were always summoned in the same order. However, not only did this version put a bunch of tokens on a card that I wanted to keep down to just 1 token, but the minions had to be pretty simple to avoid burden of knowledge which ended up making them really boring, and the static-ness of the order made the card overall super low-variance and boring. Summoning random minions of increasing mana costs had always seemed cool to me, but I just wasn't sure how to word that in any sort of reasonable way.

Finally, I came up with the idea of splitting the mana cost increase among 2 minions, so that the cost could increment by 1 for each, giving me the same total effect power that I wanted while being significantly more elegant. It took me a while to get to the current wording, but it eventually did click and I had myself a card that got surprisingly good feedback given how controversial and clunky the design process was.

Flavor - As I previously said, the card was originally going to be themed off of Kalecgos. However, once the mechanic changed from "only spells" to "no minions," theming it off of the magic-focused Blue aspect didn't really make any sense. Instead, I switched it to the Infinite Dragonflight to reflect the destructive and evil nature of the Infinite Dragonflight - their literal goal being to wipe out all life on Azeroth, I think destroying minions from your deck reflects that pretty well.

Looking among my candidates for legendary Infinite dragons, the eventual mechanics of this card were inspired by the fact that Aeonus is the boss of the Black Morass encounter in the Caverns of Time, a wave-defense style mission that summons progressively harder and harder enemies. I should have listed this design as somewhat middle-out as such.

Comments - During the debate about the first version of Kalecgos, we actually tried to test the power level of the all-spells deck with Kalec by programming Kalec into metastone, having bots play 100 games, and checking the winrate. Somehow, the bot had only a 10% winrate, but dealt an insane amount of total damage each game. Goes to show, metastone isn't all that useful for finding whether or not something is balanced, especially for extremely weird cards like this one.

Aeonus could potentially be changed to summoning only 1 minion, and increasing the duration to 6. This would go even further to load its power towards the end of the rift, to punish aggressive bursty decks trying to use it for an unfair tempo swing.

Antique Collector



Bottom-Up - In my opinion, the combo scene has been a little dry ever since we lost Thaurissan. I wanted to make a card to mix things up a bit without opening all the crazy combos that Thaurissan did.

Mechanics - I think that having cards that enable combos are fine, so long as they are not too reliable and not on the level of Thaurissan. I had been thinking about cool mechanics to include in the time set, and hand position is something I've always thought is pretty cool in the right place. I feel like hand position a hand positioning mechanic is the perfect blend of strategy, unreliability, and setup that makes combo gameplay fun.

I knew that I wanted the card to cost roughly 6 mana, and that the most reasonable place to do a cost reduction would be the left-most card in your hand, since this naturally plays into your combo cards being the things that you keep in your hand for the longest period of time. A cost reduction of anything less than (2) felt underwhelming, and anything more than (2) overbearing, so that was settled. All that was left was stats, which originally started at 4/4, but then the card was so awful for everything except for combos that I had to buff it. I might end up re-nerfing it though.

Flavor - Going off of the fact that the left-most card in your hand is theoretically the oldest one, I decided to flavor the card off of someone who collects antiques or ancient, powerful artifacts scattered through time. This idea came to me pretty quickly, but the process of finding art for such a seemingly simple concept was surprisingly arduous. I found this picture just as I was about to give up and change the flavor, then content aware filled it so that it would fit in the portrait.

Comments - As it turns out, I actually have some experience with playtesting effects that cost reduce the leftmost card in your hand. The first custom hearthstone project I ever did, my Monk custom class, had a spell in BRM that reduced the cost of the leftmost card in their hand by (3). I thought that this type of effect would be insanely strong, how often we'd be seeing turn 4 Dr. Booms, but I after a few games of *actual playtesting with LackeyCCG*, I realized that even when you do draw the card that you do want to send left it takes a *really* long time to get it there. That's what I think that this type of effect is fitting for a Combo, where you're assembling the exact cards you need over the period of an entire game.

Emissary of the End



[Update]: As you saw in the writeup for Beholder of the beginning, this card changed during the writeup process pretty abruptly. As I say at the end of this one, this is basically me carrying out some last-minute balance changes that I feel like make both of the cards a lot healthier. Not going to tamper with my thought process here, just know that some numbers aren't going to match.

Bottom-Up - Back to cards that interact with mana cost, this one the first of the four that interact with stuff in your hand, specifically the first of the two of those four that interact with just a single mana cost.

Mechanics - There's not a whole lot you can do in Hearthstone that scales 1-to-1 with amounts of Mana, but gaining Attack is one of those things that works reasonably well because of how low-value a single point of attack is. This card's effect came together pretty simply from that. Originally, it was a 0/7, but got nerfed to 0/6 because it should be average in the average case, but then down to 0/5 because of how terrifying the best-case scenario was, and finally once again to 0/4 so that at worst this card is a very salty dog. I'd rather a card be doomed to be weak than be potentially gamebreaking.

Flavor - As I've said before, high cost = future, so this guy should have something to do with the future. I thought about the hour of twilight concept, people who devote their lives to achieve a future of destruction. So I got art for what apparently is a twilight hammer cultist and named it Emissary of the End, which I think sounds pretty nice, a case where alliteration actually pulls its weight.

Comments - This card was marked for a buff, so I'm not sure if I should tick his health back up to 5 or leave it at 4 just to be safe.

The End Time



[Mechanical Comment]: I didn't slip up and forget that "all enemies" includes the enemy hero. When this Rift dies, you win the game, and the destroying all enemy minions in addition to the hero just makes your victory particularly spectacular. Also, this wording fits better into 4 lines :P

Top-Down - For an expansion that's more or less about the caverns of time, it's inevitable that we include The End Time somewhere.

Flavor - It seems pretty inevitable that we have the End Time be a rift. But not just any rift - the neutral legendary, highest-cost, rift-to-end-all-rifts super insane effect.

Mechanics - End Time inherently carries with it the connotation of a "countdown to armageddon." The obvious design jumps right out: A high duration rift with a deathrattle that wins you the game. I stayed away from this. I don't mess with instant kills. It seemed uninteractive. I'll find some other way to incorporate the flavor of End Time, I thought.

After trying a smattering of weird effects, I found myself wanting to try the countdown to GG concept again. If I could follow the same rules that Uther of the Ebon blade follows in order to make a fair win condition, then maybe this one could be fine too.

An extremely important aspect of Uther of the Ebon blade is that his win condition does not involve you doing anything extremely counterintuitive. Regardless of whether or not Uther's hero power could destroy the enemy hero, you generally want to use your enhanced hero power and gain board control. Regardless of whether the enemy uther's hero power can destroy you, you want to clear the tokens off of their board. Thus, upping the ante to a destroyed hero as opposed to having or losing board control means that the players can play the game as they are expecting it without being jarred having to adapt to a completely new strategy.

Another critical element is that Uther's win condition is interactive. Exodia paladin may as well be impossible to pull off given its success rate, and so in all other cases your opponent gets the opportunity at least once to clear your horsemen. This is also absolutely necessary to making an instant-win condition that isn't frustrating to play against.

So, that was my goal: make this rift so that it doesn't interrupt the flow of a normal game, and also make sure that it's interactive.

The first design I tried was something along the lines of, Deathrattle destroy the enemy hero, and whenever your hero takes damage gain +1 Duration. Your opponent generally does like attacking your hero, and they can do so to prolong their destruction. But this forced your opponent a bit too much to go face. A second version allowed the rift to be attacked to give it duration, but this was found to be way too hard to ever actually succeed thus not really changing the game at all.

I then decided to give End Time a token, that your opponent could kill to increase the duration of the rift. But then there was this odd thing where you wanted to utilize your tokens to trade but then doing so would increase the duration of your rift, so you'd have to go all face and then you'd have already won the game anyway.

So I threw away the idea of giving your opponent a way to increase the duration, and just went with giving it a super huge starting duration that can conditionally be decreased. Sticking with the token minions, having them also reduce end time's duration at the end of the turn seemed like the way to go. Some number tweaks later, and we arrived at the current card.

Comments - It may be counterintuitive, but the Infinite Wardens do not trigger their effect the turn they are summoned like Ragnaros and Ysera don't when they are pulled out of Y'shaarj. It's not intended that they should, either. However, this may be confusing to some players and they might think that End Time essentially has just 10 duration, which is not the case, so I may change it to start of the turn to clarify it.

Kairozdormu



Bottom-Up - Throughout the process of designing all of the class cards, I felt like there would be so many cool things that could be done with a card that replaces your deck.

Mechanics - Sort of explained in the previous section, but I really wanted a card that replaced your deck with relatively high-cost minions. I was trying out several weird ideas but none of them really formed into anything worth sharing. I felt like I had to have some theme, some interesting dynamic trigger or synergy, or else there was no reason to make this card. The only realization I had along this design process was the fact that, that's not really true. Among mechanically intense, complex and intimidating new legendaries, I feel like it's nice to have a few legendaries that, while they do something new, don't tip the game over on its head. Just going with the intuitive design of making a 7/7/7/7/7 was honestly a reasonable thing to do, and after messing with numbers that seemed like the ideal statline (an 8/8/8/8/8 was a bit too reliable since 8-drops are really strong).

Flavor - For a neutral legendary, I wanted to include some of the high-profile Bronze dragons, and I realized I hadn't done Kairozdormu, the Bronzie who started WoD. And, what a coincidence - Kairoz takes us into a world primarily known for the fact that it's ruled by **seven** lords of war. Flavor found, case closed.

Comments - I don't really have much to say here, Kairozdormu is an extremely straightforward design and it's kind of embarrassing that it took so long to come to fruition.

Tick and Tock



Bottom-Up - This synergy does give a decent chunk of attention to dragon synergy, and I was looking for an interesting twist on it.

Mechanics - “Holding Two Dragons” is a mechanic I came up with a while ago that I thought was pretty neat (see the comments section on this card), and when I was looking for new ways to hold dragons that came to mind. My logic in re-affirming that it’s an interesting mechanic as opposed to a “fake mechanic” is that, the holding dragon condition isn’t active 100% of the time and there’s definitely depth to how you play around that, so it seems like by extension there is a meaningful set of cases where you can’t meet this condition, or when you have specifically 1 dragon but not 2, as opposed to this just being a fancy version of holding a single dragon that didn’t function much differently. I asked the discord how they liked it and they gave generally positive responses, so I went further with it.

The first iteration of this card had an AoE effect that dealt 3 damage to all enemies, but I changed that after realizing that unless I super-overvalued the “holding two dragons” mechanic then it would be impossible to justify it having even remotely reasonable stats (Ironic, seeing the new Priest dragon that just came out). I ended up changing it to the current effect after wanting to create a neutral minion that dealt 1 damage to all enemies if you were holding a dragon, and also to better tie into the mechanic of holding two dragons.

Flavor - The basic idea behind the holding two dragons flavor is that you could reasonably associate it with something like a two-headed dragon. Indeed, there was a picture of a two-headed dragon that I could pass as Infinite Dragonflight-esque, so I had art out of the way.

I turned to the discord for names. I said that Tick and Tock was one possibility, but that I thought that name was better suited to a cute low-cost legendary duo. He said that the contrast between the big scary dragon and the cute two names actually worked pretty well, like how Fluffy is named in Harry Potter. I agreed, and so printed the card.

Comments - The holding two dragons mechanic actually comes from a pretty obscure source. In the fan design community, there's this type of mistake that I've dubbed overflavor, which is when you make a card design that works so hard to incorporate all of a particular character's abilities exactly into hearthstone that the resulting card, while flavorful, is a mechanical mess. When people design cards based off of characters from other games, such as "Overwatch Heroes as hearthstone cards" post #12, the chance that these cards involve overflavor is exceedingly high, since the creator's only goal is to portray the character in hearthstone with no real regard to creating interesting gameplay. I wanted to demonstrate how one might create an AU legendary without having overflavor, so I made Hanzo a card that had the two-dragon condition. My reasoning was, Hanzo's ult being two dragons makes this effect extremely flavorful, but instead of just being a generic, static effect, it actually pushes the game in a new direction, does something novel, and has synergy with a particular archetype. Whether or not holding two dragons is a great mechanic, I'm not sure, but I was just trying to show the attempt to further the game in a meaningful way.

Chronocaller



Bottom-Up - Quite simple, another cost-oriented card.

Mechanics - This is one of the first cards I made based on direct Cost interactions, if not *the* first one. I was just testing the waters with new mechanics at random, and this one had some cool applications to thinning your deck as midrange.

Flavor - Again, high cost = future and low cost = past, so this card was like someone from the future summoning people from the past to help them. Name came pretty easily from that, Chronocaller being a word for “Time Summoner” that rolls off the tongue better.

Comments - I know that this card looks low-effort, but I honestly think it’s a pretty neat design. It presents some deckbuilding and even playstyle challenges and heavily rewards the player for completing them without being overbearing.

Twilight Annihilator



Bottom-Up - With druid having a lot of synergy with really high-cost minions, I felt like I should really make sure to include a neutral 10-drop that did something interesting.

Mechanics - My goal in creating a 10-drop was to create something with Shock value, as I feel like 10-drops are essentially built for. Something which you don’t often see in super high values is damage dealing on neutral cards, so I combined that with the fact that the Time set was originally going to have more positioning-based effects and made this effect. It’s extremely rewarding for the player when it happens, but it can be played around, but not always. That double “but” means that this card will function differently in a variety of situations, which is good because we don’t want something like this to always play out in the same way.

Flavor - Big, evil dragon that deals damage => twilight annihilator. Straightforward enough.

Comments - There was an interesting discussion about the merit of positioning based effects and other such things that can be played around but are super punishing if not played around. Are they healthy? I always assumed yes, but someone brought up the point that if you lost a game to this card because you forgot to play around it, you'd be extremely frustrated. I almost agreed with this, but then I really felt like you'd be less frustrated losing to something you knew you could do better on next game as opposed to losing to something you had no control over. It's an interesting topic though - if we could have done better, do we get more self-loathing, or feel like we have more control?

Murozond



(Not going to include the tokens for this card in the doc, but they are pretty important and will be discussed, so you'd better take a look. I'll even give you a special link to an imgur album containing just the tokens, [right here](#), for ease of access.)

Top-Down - Well, we did it. We finally made it to the last write-up of our 120 cards. It's been an ordeal, and while my faith in this expansion wavered at times I think that for the most part I'm happy that I did this. It came out not as well as I originally intended, but better than I thought it would 2/3rds of the way through the class cards.

And what better way to end than with the face of the expansion himself: Murozond. Clearly, this is one of the characters that you want to recreate faithfully, so I designed him top-down.

Flavor - Lord of the Infinite Dragonflight, corrupted future version of Nozdormu, there are a few ways we could take this card. We could play on him as an inversion of the already existing Nozdormu. But Nozdormu is... odd, to say the least, and so that probably wouldn't go too well. As for the things Murozond does himself, we could base him off of being the final boss of the End Time. Also, there's something pretty interesting he has where you have to face off against two random echoes of important characters in Azeroth, which we can work with as well.

Mechanics - The way I "decided" between doing End Time for Murozond and Echoes for Murozond was pretty much just trying to make both versions of him at once and seeing which one yielded a solid final card first. You can probably guess which one came together first, so I'll just briefly summarize the Murozond ideas that were focused around him spawning an End Time rift: there were some old versions where he summoned the End Time rift and that rift was meant to be the instant-win condition. There was one time where Murozond was the all-spells or mostly-spells legendary, and I learned something important from scrapping that: As the face of the expansion, Murozond shouldn't be tied to an ultra-niche deck type, but rather something at least generally accessible by a variety of decks (assuming you're willing to risk playing a card as slow as this one, there aren't any other conditions).

For the Echo version, the thing that caught my eye originally was the fact that in WoW you fight two random echoes and in HS there are two heroes. People brought up the fact that the Echoes in WoW would look like oddly arbitrary character choices to someone who only plays hearthstone and doesn't know WoW lore. So, what if we made the pool of Echoes the 9 basic heroes, instead of these 4 random people? After a lot of discussion of a lot of confusingly similar versions, we decided to go with "add an Echo of your hero and the enemy hero to your hand."

So what should the Echoes be?

I've always been a fan of different classes having different reasons to run the same card. Take a look at a card like Stonehill Defender. You can run it in general because it's a decent-bodied minion that generates decent value. But, you can get a unique advantage by playing it in Warrior or Druid, since it gives you two Taunt minions that you can synergize with (mostly just Warrior, but hey). But furthermore, you can also run it in Paladin because a lot of Paladin legendaries have taunt, so you're more likely to get a powerful card off of it. And, you can even run it in Shaman, because the Taunt minions that Shaman has are typically really synergy-heavy, like Thing From Below and White Eyes. I think that interactions like this are super cool, where you re-evaluate a card based on the class you're currently playing in. It gets you so much more strategic bang for your buck out of your players.

So, what if we incorporate that here by having each Echo be a particular, powerful synergistic effect? This creates a really interesting dynamic where, of the two echoes you get, one of them will be an essentially random one from the enemy hero which you'll have to adapt your deck to in order to use to its full potential, and another is one that you'll be able to pre-emptively load

your deck with synergy for. “One to adapt to, one to build around” became the sort of “mantra” for this card, and I designed the echoes with that in mind - that you should be able to build around the Echoes and get some really insane value out of their effects, but that you should also be able to use the Echoes from the enemy class, even if suboptimally so.

Now, onto the Echoes themselves, one by one:

The first one designed was priest. Resurrect is a mechanic where you can definitely get a lot of value out of it when used in the right deck (big priest), but that you can still make interesting decisions around even if you’re playing an arbitrary deck, in the same way that you can adapt and play around your Kazakus potion when you get the one that resurrects 3 minions.

The second one made was Shaman - I finally got the opportunity to use this exponential value token effect that I had come up with a while ago, in a class that seemed fitting for it, in a way that was hard enough to acquire that it would be balanced. Certainly, this is best followed up with Call in the Finishers for a +4/+4 to all your minions, but any deck with a minion or two can use it and make interesting decisions with it.

Druid likes high-cost minions, and so my goal was to create an effect that synergized with high-cost minions in an elegant way. This was simply the first effect that worked. Even though it has theoretically one of the highest mana cost values, since hard removal is almost certainly going to be the way you deal with this, a slightly larger slow pile of stats doesn’t really make a difference.

Warlock was a pretty interesting one, as warlock’s class identity is pretty loud and clear but synergy with that identity hasn’t been super consistent. I did fundamentally want to go with some sort of sacrifice-based synergy, seeing the new warlock cards I’d printed this expansion, and so I thought of this design. Notably, there is a possible otk with this card, since with Violet Illusionist you can play any number of minions for free. My logic behind being okay with this is that it’s a 5-card combo requiring you to survive after playing a 10 mana 8/8 vanilla minion that does nothing that’s only accessible in wild. Now, don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that, “who cares about wild let’s throw busted combos in there,” but rather, that wild is specifically designed so that you can print cards that make what would be unfair combos in standard without messing up the whole game. Wild is built around having crazy combos and a higher power curve, and a game-winning 5 card combo doesn’t really seem all that out of place.

Warrior is not my proudest design. I knew I wanted something revolving around building a gigantic fortress of armor, as is the warrior fantasy, but the card had to give some base armor or else it wouldn’t be usable by other classes, but simply the existence of warrior armor synergy wasn’t a good enough build-around potential. I made this blunt and potentially OP version - honestly, I don’t think bluntness is a bad thing, but in the case that this card turns out to be OP, it would need a rework. Testing is required, but I think the potential 3-card combo to gain 50+

armor and reduce the cost of the opponent's hand by 4 after surviving a super dead turn might not be as OP as it sounds.

Hunter is having the same issue with warlock - but worse. Not only is synergy inconsistent but hunter's identity is somewhat unclear. However, we have seen that Blizzard is trying to push Deathrattle hunter recently, which I think is cool if it can work, so I made this effect that gives some immediate impact while also giving you synergizable Deathrattle value should you be insane enough to run Murozond as a hunter. I feel like it's fine that this card is much stronger than the other ones, because hunter deserves a stronger reward for playing such a colossally slow card.

Jaina was the spell trigger for a long time, but unfortunately there wasn't as much cool stuff that mage could do to cast a bunch of spells as I had hoped. But then I had the idea of summoning a Water elemental each cast, for a ton of value and a lot of synergy with Frost Lich Jaina as a build around, and I really liked it.

Paladin is interesting because, outside of Secret paladin, I feel like successful paladin decks have never really depended on some huge synergy or identity within their class. Shockadin was just a bunch of good cards heaped together, and Control Paladin made good use of equality and other efficient cards. Meanwhile, Buffadin and Divine shield paladin never really took off. So while paladin synergy clearly exists, can any decks utilize it in meaningful ways? All the better reason to incentivize creative deckbuilding by combining both aspects to make Paladin's echo a sort of fusion (at least in mechanics if not synergy) between Divine Shield and Buff archetypes.

Finally, I knew Rogue's echo should probably harken back to Combo and Miracle, their defining characteristic. So I was thinking about how to make exciting and impactful combo effects, and I saw how Edwin uses the "for each card you've played this turn" style combo. I used the first effect that came to mind, since it made for a really interesting alternate win condition for miracle decks, while still certainly being usable in a variety of classes.

These cards' power levels are pretty varied and I'd love to get some testing done on Murozond. But he is intended to be on the strong, if impractical, side of cards, as he is the defining figure of the expansion.

Comments - If your opponent is using a non-basic hero, then it generates a token using their hero portrait but with the same effect as the token of the same class. It would also have the same visual effect applied to their portrait. Speaking of which, I really wish that I had the resources to create a better visual filter to represent the echo concept, but I don't have photoshop, or artistic talent, sadly.

Finally, done! I assume if you're here you were probably only reading Murozond as it'd be silly to actually try to read this entire thing, so I'm not going to really write any sort of big conclusion to this document right here. Enjoy the rest of your day ~

