

**Unnamed - Apparatus Of Change**  
**Available Power : 7**

**Authority : 6**

***Bind Insect (1, Command)***

***Fortify Space (2, Domain)***

***Distant Vision (2, Perceive)***

***Collect Plant (3, Shape)***

***See Commands (5, Perceive)***

***Bind Crop (4, Command)***

**Nobility : 5**

***Congeal Glimmer (1, Command)***

***See Domain (1, Perceive)***

***Claim Construction (2, Domain)***

***Stone Pylon (2, Shape)***

***Drain Health (4, War)***

**Empathy : 4**

***Shift Water (1, Shape)***

***Imbue Mending (3, Civic)***

***Bind Willing Avian (1, Command)***

***Move Water (4, Shape)***

**Spirituality : 5**

***Shift Wood (1, Shape)***

***Small Promise (2, Domain)***

***Make Low Blade (2, War)***

***Congeal Mantra (1, Command)***

***Form Party (3, Civic)***

**Ingenuity : 4**

***Know Material (1, Perceive)***

***Form Wall (2, Shape)***

***Link Spellwork (3, Arcane)***

***Sever Command (4, War)***

**Tenacity : 5**

***Nudge Material (1, Shape)***

***Bolster Nourishment (2, Civic)***

***Drain Endurance (2, War)***

***Pressure Trigger (2, War)***

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**Animosity : -**

***Amalgamate Human (3, Command)***

**Trepidation : -**

***Follow Prey (2, Perceive)***

*Another attempt. Another failure. Another return to the records. Somewhere, somewhere in this place, some, **must** have recorded something that **works!** We have an entire tower of medical texts, anatomies, tincture and salve recipes, a whole archive of the wisdom of generations and nations, vaults of preserved materials and samples, and none of it is **working**. I cannot read, cannot learn rapidly enough, to find the proper medicine, in the proper dose. Meanwhile, as sleepless nights and failed alchemies mount up, my drandah withers away, bit by bit. My teacher is dying.*

*My friend is dying.*

A sensation like falling. Plummeting downward with nothing to hit. I bring it on myself, wrenching myself out of the memory with the same sickened feeling of pulling oneself from a nightmare with nothing but an effort of will and a need to *wake*.

Kalip is face down on top of my form, which cannot be comfortable. I'm glad he has failed to kill me as he fell, but the pressure is almost something I can feel, even without skin. Even less comfortable, as I try desperately to sort the world through the eyes of my bees, is the glowing blue toxin gathering in his fingertips and face.

I have even more of whatever magic it is that makes one magetouched now. And still no way to do anything of use with it. But I can at least stall the need for a transformative surgery.

**Small Promise** flickers to life. My magic is sluggish, as is my mind. Memories tug at me, and a gnawing hungry pain from the new soul spiked into my own makes focus impossible. But I barely need to focus for this.

*You're going to be okay.* I tell him. And then, a rambling flood of **Small Promises**, one by one, an incoherent mess of ideas until he won't be poisoned by his own overused magic. Everything from offering to let him pick the next pylon spell to making his favorite meal. I can't manage to bring **See Domain** to the fore of my mind, still struggling against a wall of failing cognition. I will simply have to trust this has been enough.

The distant roar I have been suppressing comes closer. Rushes around me, fills every facet of my thoughts. And I am gone again.

*I don't actually know what they are, but their smile transfixes me. I say yes. They cheerfully join me at the table, ignoring the empty spot on the other side to seat themselves directly next to me. The sensation of being touched is difficult to become used to. A childhood of behavior tutoring and combat lessons, cold instructions and rigid painful punishment, has left me without the ability to be lightly jostled by someone sitting next to me on a tavern bench without wanting to flinch or scream or kill them. I think they notice. But their smile barely dips before flaring back to life, and they shift away from me without asking. And for the first time, that smooth*

*coppery person makes me feel like maybe I want that pressure back. But the night is coming to a close.*

*We have no time left to us.*

Help. We need help.

Dipan will reach the fort soon. Maybe already has. There are beetles in the fort. On the wall, waiting with the others. Listening to anxious conversation. But my bees are all here, except the small ones in the hive. The ones that are still honeybees, and not personally loved guardian weapons.

I can't think. Several bees around me are hurt. Not just bees. Humans and demons and gobs and whatever Yuea is though I think human still applies to her and I cannot *focus*. The crack in my body might be hurting more than I realized. The period of rest the last time this happened may have been enforced by my new existence to give me time to heal.

But I can't let myself slip away again. I have to do something. The bees can smell the blood in the air, and not all of it is the wolv's. Or are they smelling? I don't know the sensation. I hurt. I cannot find the *words*.

The bees. I can fix the bees easiest. **Bind Insect** restores itself so quickly now, but I drain it in seconds as I pour it over wounds like wax. Seeping magic into cuts, letting it collect and layer on severed legs and wings, making solid that which was before nothing but a thought. My work is an imperfect bandage, I can tell. It will take time for the bees to fully heal. But none of them will die. I think. I hope.

The others I can do less for.

One of the gobs is wailing in pain, the noise as fuzzy though my link to the bees as their vision is. Jahn drags himself over to where Kalip is, a leg trailing behind the demon at a wrong angle as he flips the other man over, exposing the cut in Kalip's chainmail and the filthy wound underneath. Yuea is still breathing, but also still laying flat on her back; I can feel her pain, and also her almost dismissive irritation over how she's going to die before she gets to get to use her new body, the casual amusement papering over her trembling fear.

There's too much to do. I need to stop the bleeding. But I can't even touch anyone, and I think Yuea is taking every scrap of **Amalgamate Human** just to not die, though she might not realize she's doing it.

I need them to move. I have a possible solution, depending on what *health* is. I can't tell, but I have taken so much of the hot and roiling red from the wolv, and I know how to overflow it back into the world. But I need them to move.

My bees, the ones that can still move, mark a circle around Kalip. **Move Water** is ironically dry, and **Link Spellwork** is almost completely tapped as well along with it, so I will have only one small use of this. I work on guesses and estimates, using **Link Spellwork** and a reversed **Drain Health** with **Fortify Space** to being pouring whatever that boiling vitality is back to my own people.

Yuea. Get up.

*Yuea. Get up.*

It doesn't work whether I'm wishing or commanding. I don't think she can hear me. I need her to move. The gobs, wounded as they are, are dragging a bleeding Malpa to the marked space. Jahn seems to have fallen into unconsciousness. Yuea, I need you to move, please.

I summon what I can of **Nudge Material**. If nothing else, perhaps I can pile dirt on her face until...

The spell makes contact with her. My mind is still spinning, drifting, the pain is becoming background noise, but it has not stopped and I am not thinking clearer. Clearly, since I know my shaping spells cannot touch people. But...

But it did. I try again. Poking into her uninjured leg. I can touch her.

I can't make her get up, but a dozen candles of painstakingly carving stone out of a cliff face has left me with control that I can put to use, even here. I direct **Nudge Material** up, underneath her. My long ago trick to hold a crow's cage down, reversed. I push her up equally, ignoring the fact that one of her legs bends at the wrong angle, that one of her arms is missing and rapidly bleeding. And I *shove*.

I have to be careful. **Nudge Material** can slice and deform just as easily as it can move, and I don't want to slip and punch a finger width hole through her skull. But I don't think I can be as careful as I would like. So I apply just enough pressure to drag her across the ground, a trail of flattened dirt and moss in her body's wake as I shove her next to Kalip.

And then I start to work on her arm. **Nudge Material** again, one of the spells that I'm already using, that is easier to work with now that I have momentum. I press it against the stump of her arm. But the pain and the tug of memory are getting stronger and stronger, and it won't hold once I'm gone.

I need to... something. I need it to stick. A patch, like a bandage. How do I make a spell run while I'm asleep?

I already know, don't I? I've been doing it with **Distant Vision**, the casts of that still active, even if I have been ignoring them. Small dots of light and space that I simply haven't moved my mind to. I just need to do that for something... complex.

Two tries, and I am slipping away. I know what to do, in theory, but I can't account for if Yuea moves her arm - or what is left of it. So I make a crude compromise. **Shift Wood**, a wrap of bark and branch stabbed into the ground, pinning her arm down. And then **Nudge Material** at the stump, to stem the bleeding.

That far away roar, like the winds of the first of stormseason, surges again. And I am gone.

*The bolt misses by a whisper, and just like that, I am free. The pursuit took a whole claw, every sunrise sending more and more fuel into their party's belief that they needed this. That they couldn't back down now. But here we are. A river they cannot possibly cross separates us, their springbows have no shots left, and it no longer matters if they need to catch me to recoup their costs. They can't. The cost to follow now would cripple them even if they found their bounty. Their choices are ruin, or further into ruin while also sleeping in the rain. I had hoped they would stop sooner, I didn't want to scupper their lives like this. But I won't give up my life for something I never did. No matter how far I have to run, no matter how far they chase me.*

*They won't take this from me.*

I don't know why I am fighting the pull of the memory this time. I do it on reflex. The leftover horror of a nightmare I cannot wake from, but only into once again. I have to find a way to help. I have to do something.

Where am I, though? My bond to my bees is cut off, the spell empty, leaving me in darkness. A quick reference of **Know Material** shows that everything around me is near identical to what the ledger looks like when I am in the fort's meal hall. So I am back. How long has it been? It was seconds, maybe a candle at most, the first time. Did the others get to us so quickly?

For some time, I wait. But my spells aren't pulling in the empty liquid they need to function. Terror strikes me, as I see even **Know Material**, the least of my magics and the one I can sustain forever if I need, is dropping. Something is wrong with me. Something is broken.

Or, no. I can feel it, once I begin to frantically search for the cause. It isn't even a secret. I am broken. The cracks along my body, from being thrown around and from the new spike of a soul, they are doing something. I can feel the motes of power come close, but then slide away, almost as if the cracks are sluiceways that keep them from entering my body properly.

The pain has not faded. Only the memories are gone, along with any sensation of the world around me.

And I am, I feel, back where I started. Surrounded by nothing, unsure of anything that is happening. Blind and scared and sitting in the open. Only now, far worse. Because I am not scared for myself, but my friends. Not simply blind, but injured as well.

I don't know what I can do.

I use **Congel Mantra** a couple times, and wish I could hear the sound of the small discs hitting the wooden floor I believe is below me. I cast **Collect Plant** a random direction into the Green, and add what appears to be some form of ivy to my inner garden.

And then I am empty. And still hurting. And yet I don't want to sleep. I have a roiling chaotic mess of fear and want and anger in my mind, all of it tinged with guilt and pain, and if I slept...

If I slept it would mean I wasn't hurting. And I feel like I should be.

And it is with that thought that the exhaustion of my spells and souls and self finally claims me