

Unnamed - Apparatus Of Change
Available Power : 0

Authority : 4

Bind Insect (1, Command)
Fortify Space (2, Domain)
Distant Vision (2, Perceive)

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Nobility : 3

Congel Glimmer (1, Command)
See Domain (1, Perceive)
Claim Construction (2, Domain)
Empathy : 3
Shift Water (1, Shape)
Imbue Mending (3, Civic)

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Spirituality : 4

Shift Wood (1, Shape)
Small Promise (2, Domain)
Make Low Blade (2, War)

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Ingenuity : 3

Know Material (1, Perceive)
Form Wall (2, Shape)
Link Spellwork (3, Arcane)
Tenacity : 3
Nudge Material (1, Shape)
Bolster Nourishment (2, Civic)
Drain Endurance (2, War)

I do end up checking the time of day through one of my bees, seeing that it is still a bright summer day. A memory from the farmer, of raising a son, and of a period of that son sulking in his room, brings me a sense of fond chastisement that I find alternately amusing and castigating. But I am still determined to wait until more time has passed before confronting the people living with me.

So, I open up the turning machinery within my mind, and I find a true exploratory joy in the work that I have set for myself.

I have checked in with one of my bees because I need them for my first trial. I have just awoken fairly recently, and my spells are mostly all full to bursting and ready to be used, and so now is the perfect time to begin testing things that might have no practical use.

Bind Insect. Nudge Material. Two of my foundational spells, that give me eyes and hands. And now, I put them together, drawing a thread between the two with **Link Spellwork**.

Link Spellwork is much, much harder to be precise with, or to gently modify the outcome of, than many of my other spells. But when I apply it to **Bind Insect**, I find that it comes almost naturally to choose one of the specific tethers of magic that represents my link to a singular bee. And then, as the spell takes hold, the magic shifts slightly, and clicks into place like a puzzlebox.

The bees that I have under **Bind Insect** are different than normal bees. I already realized this, when I noticed them growing, and reshaping. They are also, I think, smarter than bees, a kind of subtle cleverness that I am still not sure is different than bees are usually.

This one, the one that I have channeled my spell through, does not take long at all to realize something has changed. In fact, I think they know the same instant I do. Their flight adjusts, and they rapidly spiral through the air to make toward a jutting vine from a nearby bush, seeking to land as the magic takes hold. But as they near it, the plant shifts, shoved aside from their tiny form. It feels, through the connection, as though *they* felt something as well. A pressure, like a second sense.

I give a suggestion, and the bee veers for the ground. Coming close, they hover for a brief moment, the feeling of wings hammering the air a constant presence for them, while underneath their small form, the ground is carved away in a channel.

I am not doing it. Neither is the bee, really. They are simply... a focus. **Nudge Material** is moving through them, like ink through a pen.

I keep a close eye on the reserves of all spells involved, and wish I still had feathers to rustle or eyebrows to raise. **Bind Insect** has dropped ever so slightly, while **Nudge Material** has barely moved. **Link Spellwork** has taken the largest cost, but that spell has been limited since the day I acquired it, so I do not fret.

My thoughts latch onto something. The memories of the scholar rising to the surface. Ink through a pen, the memory says. A hand guides the quill, the ink is channeled to parchment. Repetition and practice... something... something about it...

The bee. A pen.

I give a nudge to my bond. Not a complex command, but perhaps one of the more detailed suggestions I have passed along. I do not take direct control, because I am not a bee, and I cannot fly a bee as well as a bee can fly herself. Instead, I offer something else. An idea.

This is a circle, I say.

And the bee follows the pattern. A loop in the air, close to the ground. And **Nudge Material** flows with it, plowing a furrow through the dirt and small stones and bits of campfire ash. It is imperfect, but it is easily the equal to what I could do with the spell myself.

In half the time, for a tenth the cost.

I will need to see, now, if my bees can learn to write. Or at least learn complex shapes. If I could even so much as have a handful of letters or glyphs... well, communication has not been my dominance, so far in this life. And perhaps this could change.

But not right now. Right now, I let the bee go back to its own business, releasing the connection between the two spells. I have other things to try now.

I *would* try other combinations with my bees, such as **Shift Water** as a way to actually carry fresh water to the camp without exhausting myself faster than any of the living people here would. But I am actively trying to not draw attention to myself at the moment.

To be polite. Not because I am terrified of what might happen. Of losing everyone.

Of course.

Regardless. Other things to try. I have a supply of **Link Spellwork** remaining and I aim to deplete it before I become distracted.

Imbue Mending feels like something that would pair well with any number of things. **Make Low Blade** especially, but also **Form Wall** or even **Shape Wood**. But something about **Claim Construction** is calling to me here right now.

The spell has changed slightly since I elevated my **Nobility**. Or, perhaps not so much changed, as it has expanded. Made it easier for me to understand it.

It isn't a singular arcane pattern. It is, like so many of my other spells, tethered to the things it touches. Though in a small way that means almost nothing to me. **Bind Insect** at least has the courtesy to feed me information through the bonds, and **Make Low Blade** may not tell me much but it at least gives a clear indication of if the blade exists. Instead, **Claim Construction** seems to have tethered to... well, something. A thing.

The limitations of words frustrates me. But at least I only need to decide how to describe this to myself. Perhaps it would be best to say that the tethers to the two huts and several sections of wall I have claimed are empty. They provide no knowledge or feedback, aside from the fact of their own existence.

But, in a way, that is enough. After all, what does it actually take for me to *aim* a spell? Only knowledge of a target, really. But there is something I wish to test.

Imbue Mending is one of those spells that carries a high cost. Useable perhaps once per day. And I have, before, used it on one of the huts. It works just fine, or so I am told. My bees are many things, but good at inspecting structural elements is not one of them.

So now, I call upon **Link Spellwork** again, pulling on **Imbue Mending**, and **Claim Construction**, and saying to them that here. Here is a connection. Work through this, and let's see if it does anything different.

The sensation of a spell's entire reservoir draining so rapidly is like the pull of the void within my body. An almost physical tugging that comes close to hurting. But the magic does not crack me, and I focus on the feeling of the arcane flowing through the machinery in my mind, out into the world, guided through the tether to one of the walls around our camp.

Imbue Mending takes hold. The spell, which I have been using at every chance on tattered clothing and worn shoes and boots, is perhaps one of the most magical things I have. It can pull rips back together, fuse material back into its desired shape, patch holes, and remove those horrible burrs that hide themselves exactly where you don't want them. The only thing it can't do seems to be make more cloth, but it is still a simple camp magic that lets everyone, especially the children, feel like things are improving.

Oh, and it doesn't seem to fade. The effects of it are slow, but they take hold, and they *stay*. For how long, I cannot yet say, but the spell does not care if the rips in the shirt are from before or after its presence began.

And now, it pours into the wall. And the wall starts to fix itself, the hardened dirt mixed with bits of wood and stone pulling itself back together, repacking some of what has come loose.

While in my inner mind, through **Claim Construction**, urged on by the link between the two spells, the tether to the wall comes to life. A blaze of knowledge that I was not expecting and erupts out of the blank nothingness that was there previously.

Imbue Mending is active, and it will be for the next thirty days. Well, just short of thirty days. I can see the amount of time it has remaining, slowly decreasing. It is not exactly a number, but I can count it if I need to, and do so quickly. Though that is actually mentally exhausting, so I only do it a few times to get a feel for how long a day is, and then I resolve to make educated guesses in the future.

Still. This is something truly different. I have *added* a form of perception to a spell. A sense that I did not know I was missing. I can *feel* the fixes being made to the wall. Not as if I were touching the dirt and feeling it shift under my fingers, no. But I can tell that repairs are being made, to what part of the wall, and what kind of improvement I can expect that to translate to.

The rush is exhilarating. It's so simple, it's the same as **Know Material** really, in many ways. And yet, it is not, because *I made this myself*. Unintentionally, yes, but I have called this into being without needing to spend my power, and now even more of the world is revealed to me.

Already, I am thinking that I must do this to every piece of wall I have. Because if I can see what parts of the wall are being repaired, then *I can tell if the wall has been damaged*. My tiny insect eyes cannot be everywhere, and I should not expect them to be ever vigilant, but with *this*, I have a part of an early warning system that would let me react. Let me live without feeling like the dark edges of the world are quite so impenetrable.

I have enough **Link Spellwork** left to try one more thing, as long as that thing does not involve **Distant Vision**. I would use my expanded **Nobility** to play around with **Congel Glimmer**, but my promise to abide by a community vote still stands. A scared part of my mind asks the question I do not want an answer to, of what happens if the community is gone? If I am left to myself, then... am I the only vote to cast? Or have I bound myself to people that could take my power with them when they leave?

The thought is grim and unpleasant, and it saps the joy I have been experiencing in the ebb and flow of my magic. If I had a smile before, it fades now as I face the reality that my life may be about to upend once more.

But there is nothing to be done about it, is there? Either they accept me, or they do not, and all I can do is respect that.

I stew in my own worry and frustration for some time, but find myself interrupted. My beetle calls my attention through **Bind Insect**. I did... not actually know that my bonds could call to *me*, I had assumed this road only went one direction. But now that it has done so, it seems to radiate something akin to a very faint *smugness*, a feeling that I didn't think a beetle, no matter how large or empowered, could hold. I am learning all kinds of things today it seems.

I look in on the beetle's surroundings. It is on the map again, the smooth pane of bark that I have been carving in, that the camp was using as a meeting table. I do not know if it moved there on its own, or was placed there, but there are human and demon faces gathered around, and looking down on it as if waiting for the bug to make a decision.

Ah, I see. This is why it has sought my attention.

Because they have made a choice.

My distraction has served its purpose. I set my magic aside for now, except what I need to see and write. And I slip myself fully back into the world, to see what fate awaits.