

Unnamed - Apparatus Of Change
Available Power : 3

Authority : 2

Bind Insect (1, Command)

Fortify Space (2, Domain)

Nobility : 2

Congea! Glimmer (1, Command)

See Domain (1, Perceive)

Empathy : 2

Shift Water (1, Shape)

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Spirituality : 3

Shift Wood (1, Shape)

Small Promise (2, Domain)

Make Low Blade (2, War)

Ingenuity : 2

Know Material (1, Perceive)

Form Wall (2, Shape)

Tenacity : 2

Nudge Material (1, Shape)

Bolster Nourishment (2, Civic)

Form Wall is one of those spells that doesn't simply need to be aimed, it needs to be provided construction material to work with. The last time I tried this, in my overeager excitement, I simply told it to use stone.

There is, of course, plenty of stone around us. My spell to **Know Material** can show me the composition of the simpler elements of the world to a distance of what it tells me is almost thirty lengths. I still am left uneducated on what a length is, but I can roughly guess from what I have observed. And I can also say with certainty that **Know Material** is a spell that is not particularly bound by where the surface starts or ends.

Around me, there is wood from the forest, dirt and soil on the woodland floor, an amount of bone that has risen dramatically recently with the slaying of a collection of strange monsters, grain and fruit from the food stores of the humans encamped around me and cloth and wax from their spare supplies. Water from the nearby stream, and metal from the earth.

And overshadowing every one of these things, an absurd number representing the collective total amount of stone that is within the scope of my magical sense.

There is quite a lot of soil. There is even more dirt. But below it all, *everything* sits on a foundation of stone, and I wonder if it is only kept from seeming endless by the fact that I will never be able to see the bottom of its reach.

And it is from this solid mass that I told **Form Wall** to draw from, to make my first structural mark upon the world. Foolish. I exhausted myself more rapidly and thoroughly than I knew possible in this new life. Though, it is a reassuring feeling, to know that being something so different to every life I ever lived, I am still capable of making humiliating mistakes.

Across six - now seven - lives, three species plus whatever I have become now, and what I suspect is hundreds of years of time, the one constant is that I have always found a way to make a poorly planned choice from time to time. Perhaps if someone was watching, I would be embarrassed, but as I continue to slowly rotate my crystalline body in the small divot I have unearthed for myself within the dirt, unseen, I do not feel anything but benign amusement.

Now, though, the survivors have begun digging a latrine on the outskirts of their camp. And the dirt from it, piled nearby, is both loose and available. I do not think anyone would begrudge me making some use of it, for this test.

Form Wall. I cast the spell out into the world, and while I want nothing more than to marvel and wonder at the movements of the machinery of the arcane that turns within my mind, I am uncertain when the next attack against my people will come. I need to be moving with purpose, and I need to be making progress. So I *focus*, not just on where I point the spell and what I ask of it, but on what it is *doing*, and what knowledge I can glean from it.

By the end of the spell's short flame of life, I am no closer to understanding magic itself. But within the turning of the rings and lines in my mind, and the extension of my will out onto the physical world, I notice things that are beginning to become familiar to me in a novel way.

The spell asks for materials. This I knew, yes. But it isn't simply asking for one thing. Like with **Make Low Blade**, there is a space there within the working to offer it something supplemental. When I am making knives, I have given it pelt that the spell has forged to a hilt. But here, I am not sure what it would do exactly. Underneath even *that*, though, there is another small emptiness. Like a slot in a puzzle box, waiting for a hidden key to fill it.

But I don't know what it *wants*, in any way that makes sense to me. I don't even know if it's something I can give it. Does it want some of my power? Or is it a specific substance that I don't yet know the nature of? I continue to watch, trying to focus on the shape of the gap. It is hard, even with my improved clarity, and I find my thoughts constantly reminding me of other spells that I could be using instead of paying proper attention.

Frustration threatens the edges of my thoughts. Despite being forged into this new body, and this collective set of souls, I still find myself without the reflexes and senses that would tell me how to make my way in even the most basic ways of this creature I have become.

Frustration cannot hold my focus. **Form Wall** continues its work, and under the hot sunlight among the rich greenery overhead, what was loosely piled dirt begins to rearrange itself under the touch of my magic.

Slowly at first, and slowly the whole way throughout. **Form Wall** does not seem to be a spell that has any particular hurry to its action. But it is a steady change, and as it alerts the pile of dirt, it continues to shift it all throughout, the spell keeping me informed as it improves the foundation, anchors it to the ground, smooths the surfaces, and packs into hardness the material I have given it.

What I am left with, after perhaps a half a candle, is a simple dirt wall surrounding the camp's latrine. Not quite a length in height, it has formed in a clean half-circle, and it is not the finest wall to ever grace the world.

The spell does not give me sight, and it does not give me a tether to my wall like **Congea** **Glimmer** or **Make Low Blade** do to their own constructs. However, it does tell me as it finishes some of the finer points of my new construction.

It will last maybe three rains, if the rain is not particularly heavy. Or, if the rain doesn't come, it will take a pair of people the work of an afternoon with a mattock to tear it down.

It is not a sturdy wall, nor a permanent one. But as I learn all the things my spell has done, and I examine the wall through the spell before the connection is cut off, I think it is a good first effort. And it tells me a few things that I did not know before.

It *could* be permanent. It *could* be better made. All it would take would be the right supplies, and a little more strength to my working. And perhaps knowledge of what it is I am missing from the spell's cast.

I check **Nudge Material**. It has hardly moved at all in its supply of empty liquid, and I do not think I could expend enough to write a message to the humans asking them to break stones for me. Nor do I think that would be a good use of their time; their lives are already cluttered enough, they do not need me acting as a taskmaster to them now. So, until I can begin again to talk to them about shared construction, I try to solve my own mystery.

Peering through my own mind, looking at the vibrant and odd machinery of the spells my souls hold within them, I start to look for similarities to **Form Wall**. And to my surprise, I find them almost right away. **Bolster Nourishment** has a similar slot, like it is waiting for a key, but it is... smaller. Slimmer? I do not have a word for it. It is looking in the same way but it is looking for something different. Something that, unlike **Form Wall's** demand, I do not feel any resonance for at all.

Bolster Nourishment doesn't need anything added to it to be of powerful use, though. And I take the opportunity to pour the spell's energy into the fruit that the armored woman has brought back and is carving up with her new knife to share with the others of the camp. I don't hold back on the magic, letting it exhaust me to put all of it into their meal.

With that done, I continue looking through my magics. And now, with two things to compare, it is even easier to find the space in **Make Low Blade**. It is much more obvious, the spell seeming to have unfolded more than the others. Like a flower blooming, the memories of a cleric who loved to garden nudge me to compare it to. **Bind Insect** is then easier to see the space in, the place waiting for a key. But that spell has not opened enough for it, it *will* want it, later, but not *yet*.

I am making leaps of logic and conjecture. But I can feel the settling of an idea in my crystal flesh. The more I grow, the easier it will be to examine closely the workings of my spells, and the more they will offer more key slots. I believe.

I have one last spell to take a close look at, and then make use of, before I settle back to wait for things to refill with that empty nothingness that fuels me. And though my concentration is starting to slip after what feels like hours of close mental examination of my own thoughts and magic, **Congea! Glimmer** still has a warm and vibrant feel to me.

It was the spell that let me bond myself to the people here. That let me show them some trust, and give them some hope. Against what, I do not yet fully know, but it is there all the same, and I value the magic that offered it to us. I still do not know it's true scope or nature, but the humans can make use of it beyond what I can, and so, I prepare to once again cast it out to the spot among the roots of the tree I am buried near.

But first, I take a look at its arcane lines and rings. And what I see pulls my spell short. Because now that I know what to look for, I find it quite obvious. Perhaps so obvious I should have seen it earlier.

Several of my spells have gaps and holes, like they are waiting for something to unlock a further spin of their casting. And here, quite clearly, within the mechanisms of **Congea! Glimmer**, is something that I can only call a key.

I only hesitate slightly to create another glimmer to share with my humans. But when next the spell refills, I think that I am going to try something novel. And my mind spins as I wonder what secrets I can unearth with this new knowledge.