

Unnamed - Apparatus Of Change
Available Power : 1

Authority : 3

Bind Insect (1, Command)

Fortify Space (2, Domain)

Distant Vision (2, Perceive)

Nobility : 3

Congea! 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 : 3

Shift Wood (1, Shape)

Small Promise (2, Domain)

Make Low Blade (2, War)

Ingenuity : 3

Know Material (1, Perceive)

Form Wall (2, Shape)

Link Spellwork (3, Arcane)

Tenacity : 2

Nudge Material (1, Shape)

Bolster Nourishment (2, Civic)

The prayer takes three. You can do it with more, but then you need three sets of three. And then three sets of three sets of three if you want it to be louder still. A village could maybe have that many faithful, but it's better to stick to three. Of course, if you don't *have* three, because you are by yourself in a wet coastal cave waiting for dawn so you can keep running, you improvise. Take your faith, pour it into a coin. Believe in your heart that the coin can believe. Make for yourself a talisman. Then do it again. They aren't real people, but they stand in, for fallen friends, for missing loves. They will be your three. I arrange my lost coins in an even triangle with myself, and run a hand over my remaining horn. The prayer needs to work, or I am in very real trouble. But it's okay. I have faith.

The memory fades. This one was not a dream, this one I could feel building and turning within myself, waiting to be let in. The sensation grew with every passing beat after I made use of my accumulated power to fill the last open gap in the **Ingenuity** facet of my soul.

I spent my power with the lightening of the sky, and began to use my mostly refilled spells to test the limits while the majority of the camp was still asleep. But almost as soon as I did, before I could really understand what I was working with, I could feel the pull of the memory in my souls.

It rose like a tide, quickly flooding my lower stray thoughts, becoming a distraction that I could not ignore forever. Or even for much longer. And I will admit, it frightened me. It was so sudden, it didn't wait for me to be asleep, or even to mentally prepare myself. It simply *was*, and it was with a faltering resignation that I allowed my whole self to slip into it.

But it didn't hurt me. The memories never did, it seemed. Even as I lived the cold and the gnawing dread and the low anger that burned in my old heart, they didn't hurt *me*. But they did change me. And whether I liked it or not, I was bound to be changed more in my new life.

And that is acceptable. It must be.

But that does not mean that I cannot distract myself with something wondrous, in the meantime. **Link Spellwork** is fascinating. While I have realized that some of my spells let me feed them other spells as material components, **Link Spellwork** lets me take that several steps farther. Creating a bridge between two spells, feeding its own empty liquid into a tie between their workings like oil into a clockworks.

I tried it on something simple at first, simply to avoid making a fool of myself. **Nudge Material** and **Know Material**. It didn't accomplish much, and in truth, it didn't actually cost me anything from **Link Spellwork**'s reservoir, which made me think I had not done anything after all.

So I tried something else. **Nudge Material** and **Shift Wood**, and a look at a sturdy branch that was waiting to be used as firewood. And suddenly, it clicked. There had never been anything stopping me from using both spells at the same time, but *now* they worked as one smooth hand when I directed them to work. The wood parted easily, and my control was ever so much sharper, and all it cost was the consumption of their respective sources at nearly twice the pace that they normally required.

I cut off my experiment before I drained myself completely. The feeling had been an exhilarating rush, as the magic seemed to leap and dance on my command. I *knew*, in a logical way, that the room I had for improvement was still vast. The memories of a farmer's hand carved crafts showed me that I still couldn't even match the skill of one of my own old lives, and I had the actual flow of the world on my side now. But still, there had been something like the feeling of a true breakthrough when I had felt the spells connect.

Ah, and the cost to **Link Spellwork** was sharp as well. It will take me days and days of careful study to learn everything this spell can do, and as I have repeatedly proven to myself, I am not one for careful study. Oh, learning is beautiful, yes. But I cannot keep notes within my mind, and while **Shift Wood** would let me make marks, reading them back is currently beyond me.

Still, every experiment is exciting and valuable, and I believe I have just enough for one or perhaps two more.

On a whim, I decide to see if I can now accomplish what I could not before. **Distant Vision** shows me a small patch of the forest at least a thousand lengths away. In the cold light of a morning that has not fully dawned, the trees and the bank of a small river seem almost frozen in time, even as the leaves move in the wind and the water flows. But I am not here to appreciate this particular beauty, I am here to try something new.

Link Spellwork connects to the **Distant Vision** the control and force of **Shift Water**. And now, aiming through my own sight, I grab at a cupped orb of the stream, and *lift*. And with the intermediary spell binding the two together, my aim holds true. It does not matter now that it is far from me, that it is well outside what I should be able to touch. The limit is swept away with a small splash of pure, cold water.

I want to laugh, to cheer. This changes *everything*.

Shift Water and **Distant Vision** slip from me abruptly. Everything they had reserved, boiled away into motionless steam in the barest hint of a moment. The water I was holding splashing back to the stream without my touch still upon it.

It would seem this changes less than I had hoped. The cost to combine those two particular spells is the difference between a trip between towns and a journey across the sea. Is it the distance? It surely must be. But it will take me a day of waiting to confirm it.

Link Spellwork is dark and cold now. It would seem that the more sturdy a soul any given spell needs to be offered to me by the forces beyond my ken, the more quickly it eats away at its own stamina. And after only two small uses, it has already been drained away.

I have so many more ideas though. Even the smallest and most innocuous combinations, I simply wish to observe the results. What if I pass **Nudge Material** to a specific bee through **Bind Insect**? A bee that can move the earth? A bee that is, itself, moved on invisible wings? Could the *bee* cast the spell through me?

What if I pair **Fortify Space** with **Form Wall**? Do I get a stronger wall? A wall protected from... whatever it is **Fortify Space** protects from? I almost wonder if it wouldn't simply produce the result of **Claim Construction**, in a rougher way.

Fortify Space with **Bolster Nourishment**. Food that is kept safe and preserved, maybe. Or food that spreads my domain to the consumer. **Imbue Mending** with **Low Promise**, a self-fulfilling oath to repair shoes.

Not even death would be enough to blunt my imagination at this crossroads, now that I have this casual brush of creative potential waiting for me to simply uncover the new arcane colors that await.

It does not take long for determination to set in. I need to form more power, and I need to further strengthen my **Ingenuity**. As I have well established by now, this will bolster every spell under its blanket. And with more **Link Spellwork**, I will have more and more choices, fewer and fewer limits.

Someday I will see my own surroundings for the first time. Someday I will feel my first touch of the moon, the first drop of rain. More choices, fewer limits, ever forward toward a bright future.

All of that, though, needs me to use my magic now. And I will not get lost in my own thoughts for too long, no matter how easy it is. After all, here in the unseeing space of my mind, a length under the dirt, I have nothing but my thoughts.

The human and demon refugees will be beginning to wake soon, and I will help where I can. Small fixes and my archived expertise on what berries are safe. Kind bees to lead the children home from their adventures.

A small modification to their voting box, first. One new slot for their tokens, one that I wish I had thought to offer as a choice yesterday. I don't know exactly how to portray it, so I use written words instead and hope that someone will read it to those who have not yet found our language lessons fruitful.

Let me choose, myself.

I hope they will understand why I put that there. Because I want to be trusted. But also, I want to **Link Spellwork** everything I have together with **Congea! Glimmer**, and see what wonders cascade forth.