

It took an hour of planning, research and preparing for me to finally leave the apartment after that revelation. In all honesty I had planned on taking an actual break on my first day back instead of jumping right back into everything, but it was impossible to ignore the potential my new cards held. So off I went, leaving the apartment and heading down to the parking lot... only to realize I still had my truck carded. With a curse I headed back inside and back up the stairs, grabbing my bicycle before heading back down and out. I rode quite a bit away from the apartment before walking into an alley and driving back out.

After that it was off to my first stop, a used furniture shop. I looked around inside for a bit before snagging a beat up but robust coffee table. With some help from the workers it was loaded into the back of my truck. I paid in cash, appearing as someone else of course. I drove away and hardly a minute later pulled into a parking garage, carded the table and left. My next stop was a series of masonry shops across the city. It took four hours for me to pick up thirteen different slabs of reclaimed hearthstone of various materials, though all of them were real stone. It took at least an extra hour to find places to card each of the flat, pre-cut stones, each one needing their own card.

From there I headed to a shop Ema had found me before I left, a simple store we knew sold coins for various christian saints. I had to settle on the silver version instead of a cheaper metal, but I walked out with fifteen matching coins of Saint Christopher, the saint of traveling, travelers and motorcycle riders. A quick examination later showed they had the concepts I needed.

Next I visited a few of the crystal shops around the city, a new one and two I had been to previously. I was very glad I had my face changing mask, because I had been to one of those shops three times in the past two weeks. The first two unfortunately didn't have what I was looking for but the third new one did. I happily bought a set of twenty moonstone rocks, a mineral known for protecting travelers apparently. It shimmered in a multicolored rainbow when you looked at it under the right light, oddly reminding me of the energy of the Bifrost. The rocks were all smoothed down and polished, similar enough that they stacked together into one card.

My final stop was a bit of a stretch for what I was looking for. Ema and I had debated for a while trying to figure out as many places as possible to find travel and point to point related concepts in as simple a way as possible so it wouldn't end up a mess. I knew from prior experience that cars carried travel and transportation, but carried way to many other concepts and would massively transform anything I mixed them with. Instead I headed down to another hobby shop and bought two different types of radio antennas as well as two brands of small but relatively powerful radio transmitters, as well as twenty nice, solid, well made compasses.

When I arrived home twenty minutes later the first thing I did was reinforce the table with half my remaining sheets of aluminum and a single sheet of titanium. The result was a table that Ema could do jumping jacks on in her exosuit and it wouldn't even budge. I pushed it out into the living room, dropping the rest of my purchases onto the table, except for the hearth stones.

“Did everything work out?” Ema asked as I did so, floating around the table and scanning everything.

“I got everything I wanted.” I answered, sitting down on the couch. “And everything had the right concept, though moonstone and the coins are a bit more complicated than I had hoped. Should still work though.”

I emptied the bags and my cards, organizing everything into piles before going over the order of combinations in my head. This whole project hinged on something I hadn't actually tested yet, mostly because I had been too excited by the possibilities if it worked. I recarded the antenna, the moonstone, the compasses and the coins, all in groups of fifteen, studying the cards for a moment before sighing.

“Alright Ema, cross your fingers.”

I combined the group of coins with the group of moonstone, resulting in a card full of fifteen carved St. Christopher moonstone coins that were slightly larger than a Kennedy half dollar. They were marbled with silver and had a large concept of travel as well as some sort of travel luck or blessing. I also was happy to find the idea of it being a group or a stack of something increased. These were items that vaguely belonged together.

Next I added the first group of radio receivers, adding a level of receiving communications and data, of connecting. Again the concept of grouping was increased. And finally I added the compasses. The result was a group of items that had strong concepts of travel, travel luck, data communication. They also held a strong connection to each other. Each of these was linked together, the concept of a collection or group of items having been hammered home through all of the combinations.

I pushed all of the objects out onto the table, noticing that they all now looked exactly the same. Fifteen moonstone and silver carvings of St Christopher with wired metal rims. I picked one up and realized I knew exactly where the other ones were.

“Ema, come here.” I said, smirking and trying to hold back my excitement.

When she floated closer I took one of the stones and balanced it on her frame before closing my eyes.

“Fly around the room.” I said, my eyes still closed.

With the second stone in my hand I could feel where she was flying, and could point my finger towards her. When I opened my eyes I was still pointing directly at her.

“Well... that is a pretty interesting discovery.” I said with a wide grin. “Gonna have to figure out if this is because I added the compass group or because the one I'm holding has the concepts of a compass.”

I snagged the rock balanced on Ema's head and carded it and the rest of the stones. Now came the most important part, what would make or break this experiment. I summoned a double card of the Bifrost energy and added it in. Then another... and another. I added all seven of the double cards of Bifrost energy, checking the progress of the stones at each step. The group of stones was steeped in magic, energy and the unique Bifrost sense of travel between two points. I could feel the group becoming even closer tied, though the level of the group concept stayed the same. I was so close.

I rushed to my bedroom, grabbing something and returning, dropping my right arm vambrace, the one without the shield, on the couch next to me. My hands shaking slightly, I pushed two of the stones from the group, freezing for a moment as I watched them radiate wisps of energy. I grabbed them both and quickly combined them each with one of the transmitters before combining them together. This new stone was now slightly bigger, and had the same concepts but stronger, mixed with data sending. This was now, for all intents and purposes, the hub stone. I pushed out the remaining stones, closing my eyes for a moment as I held the larger one. The sense for the smaller stones was even stronger now.

Quickly I combined the vambrace with the stone, creating a B ranked arm brace that had a large silver moonstone accent along the top of it, a set in oval of stone, accented by metal bands and silver streaks. It was no longer leaking wisps of energy but it still retained its most powerful concepts. Putting it down I grabbed the other stones and pushed out a square of reclaimed hearthstone, combining it with a singular stone. I couldn't help but laugh at the results. Quickly I repeated the process with the twelve other stones before pushing one of the results onto the floor. I stood and walked into the bedroom, closing the door, Ema following me in at the last second.

“Warren... are you sure this is going to work?” She asked as I frantically pulled on the vambrace. “It's only B ranked and uses magic and energy you don't understand.”

“You mean like how I understood all the other stuff I've made?” I ask with a smirk, the vambrace now on firmly. “Besides I think it's probably B ranked because on the magic scale this isn't that impressive.”

I took slow, deep breaths, working for a moment with my eyes closed, trying to calm my beating heart. After a full minute of slow breathing I open my eyes and look at Ema.

“I gotta try Ema. I'm wasn't picking up any negative concepts even close to the top and it's actually pretty simple concept wise. At least for what I'm trying to do.”

Ema let out a long sigh before floating further away, to the back corner, before turning back to me.

“Alright, go ahead.” She said, now out of any sort of danger zone

I nodded and for a moment, focused on the vambrace, wondering how I would activate it. After a while of nothing happening I frowned.

“Thor had to call for a pick up, maybe try saying something?” Ema recommended.

I nodded and focused on the vambrace again, quickly going through any word I could think of except for Heimdall because I really didn't want his attention on me, especially not when I was experimenting with Bifrost energy. After a while guessing random words I was strating to get desperate.

“Fuck, I don't know... Travel?”

In a blast of color and shimmering magic I disappeared. For a split second I felt like I was being sucked through a straw, spun through a rainbow of color and speed before I was dropping feet first onto the modified hearthstone landing pad. I threw my arms out to steady myself, almost falling forward on my face anyway. I was breathing hard, the rough transition having knocked the wind out of me. I couldn't help but shout and laugh in excitement when I had recovered.

“It worked Ema! It fucking worked!”

----- *Later That Day* -----

Ema had me sit down for one of her most detailed scans after the successful test, making sure that I hadn't suffered any adverse effects. When I failed to show early signs of radiation exposure she begrudgingly let me get back to work, which first entailed me putting down a second landing pad and testing that I could jump to either of them. It took me a solid thirty minutes to figure out that by saying “Travel, Living Room” and “Travel, Bedroom” I could choose where I ended up. I was getting the strong feeling that the concept of magic was seriously filling in the gaps of what this creation could do.

When I finally figured out how they worked Ema pulled up a map of the world on my laptop. She zoomed in on New York and put a pin around where the apartment was.

“Alright, so I'll want a few around New York, just for convenience sake.” I said, pointing out a spot in queens and a spot much farther into the state.

“Are you sure you want to use it for convenience?” She asked. If someone got their hands on one because they noticed you jumping back and forth they would be able to set up a pretty damning trap.”

“Fuck... yeah your not wrong.” I agreed with a nod. “Okay, we will take it easy on the nearby ones first. The ones in other states are less dangerous because I'll be able to really look around for a good hiding spot.”

“Alright. The more hidden the better I suppose. When you leave there is barely anything noticeable but arriving had a flash of light.” She said as she marked the location with little markers on the computer. “Where else?”

“Maybe four scattered around the United States? Chicago, California, Texas and... maybe one in the middle of nowhere? I could build a small bug out cache in the middle of a desert or something.” I suggested, Ema putting marks where I said. “One in Canada as well, though I don't know where exactly.”

“Maybe one in Japan?” Ema suggested, getting a nod from me. “And one in the UK?”

“Yeah, those are both good ideas. Maybe one in Germany?” I suggested. “Then one in Egypt, Brazil and Australia? That's all of them right?”

“Yes it is.” She said, putting dots on my suggestions. “That seems like a good spread.”

“It will be a while before I get around to putting down the ones in other countries, but there is no reason not to take a trip around the US when I'm finished with Clint's order... and experimenting with the guns they should have for me.”

“Are you going to put the nearby ones down today?” Ema asked, floating around my head.

“I have to. There is no way I'll be able to sleep or focus on anything else until these are hidden somewhere useful. I'll be able to teleport back though, so it won't even be that bad.”

About an hour later I was walking on the sidewalk, under a small bridge around the far border of Queens, looking around and checking for cameras. Finding none, I walked around the concrete structure of the bridge, climbing the dirt and rocky area. There were plenty of trees around to muffle any light coming off of my arrival, as well as a tall concrete barrier on two sides.

I dug a small pit for the landing pad, nestling it into the hold and burying it, covering it with dirt and masking the whole as best I could by scattering leaves and rocks over it. Satisfied that only someone with training would be able to spot it I looked around for a minute before smirking.

“Travel Home.”

In a rush of colored light I was suddenly back in my apartment, once again having to throw my hands out to counter my momentum on arrival. Ema floated around me immediately, scanning me for a few moments before backing away.

“Welcome home.” She said, bobbing around for a moment. “Are you going to head right back out to place the next one?”

“Yeah, this is the one that will really keep me safe, I’ll be able to give anyone who catches me around the city the complete slip.”

“Alright. At least you won’t have to drive back.”

And with that I left again, riding off on my bike to find a place to switch to my truck. I drove for around four hours, not counting when I stopped for dinner and a break. By the time I stopped on a seemingly random road the sun was already set. I carded my truck when the road was empty and walked into the woods, climbing a slight hill for about five minutes. I stopped and turned back, noting with satisfaction that I could just barely make out the road, but there was no way anyone on the road would be able to see up here with any sort of detail. I quickly dug a small pit and placed the second landing pad in it, carefully burying and hiding it again. With a smirk I looked around, nodding before looking down at my vambrace.

“Travel Home.”

When I arrived I collapsed back down on the couch with a big grin, unable to stop. Ema flew around me and looked down at me as I laid back.

“Where did you put it?” She asked.

“On a seemingly random road about four hours away.” I explained. “There is a small town about a two minute drive from it and I tucked the landing pad itself far enough into the tree line that it should cover any light from me traveling there. “

“That’s as good a spot as any I suppose.” Ema said with a bobbing nod.

“I’m just happy to finally have a solid, probably unblockable escape path.” I said, looking down at the vambrace. “I don’t know if I’ll be able to take this off now. It’s too much of a reassurance for me to not have it with me at all times.”

“Are you going to bond it to you?” Ema asked, floating away to the laptop.

“Not until I can confirm other people can’t travel with me. If it’s capable of it then bonding with it might make that impossible.”

Ema and I discussed the best places for the remaining landing pads for another hour, debating on which side the Chicago landing pad should go, and whether we should put the Texas pad in Austin or Dallas. Eventually it was too late for debating and I headed to bed, tired from all the excitement during the day.