

Raziel Ether Mentor Initiation:

Raziel picked up air magic relatively quickly and even impressed Thes, the air magic mentor, by how fast he seemed to master levels of air magic. Ether magic however, which is an extension of air magic, was a bit of a struggle for the CCCat. In the grand scheme of things, this was likely a good thing. The naturally gifted and intelligent CCCat, Raziel, had to pause and observe more carefully when learning Ether magic. He had anticipated being able to pick it up quickly as a musician, but if anything, it made learning the magic more difficult.

"You strugglin'?" Envello, the Ether mentor asked their straining student while scratching their ear nonchalantly. Raziel huffed and released the orb of air he had been trying to corral between his hands.

"I can't seem to get it to cooperate!" Raziel groaned in annoyance causing a chuckle to escape his mentor. Envello stepped towards their pupil, "Yer' forcin' it too much," they explained, "Can't brute force something as thin as the air into changin'." The Ether mentor waved their hand to emphasize their point, their defect giving a little fizzle as they moved. Raziel sighed, knowing this was a struggle of his.

Envello gave another chuckle and plopped down into the extremely casual lawn chair they used to observe students unceremoniously. "Gotta go with the flow and learn to observe before y'can cause any change." Raziel nodded in response, listening to his mentor.

"You know how the weave of the air looks, feels, and flows. And y'know how to move it and change it, yes?" The mentor asked their student, who nodded and responded with a simple yes. "So now," Envello said, sitting up and putting their elbows on their knees, "ya need to *alter* it." The mentor grinned, "You *know* how to do this, ya've seen it done, so," Envello looked at their student quizzically, "what's causing ya' to struggle s'much?"

Raziel groaned and held his head in his hands, "It just keeps... moving so *unpredictably*! I can't get a grip on the molecules before they suddenly slip out of my fingers!" The white CCCat's ears dropped as they huffed in exasperation.

"Then adapt," the Ether mentor said with a nonchalant grin, "molecules'll always be movin', just gotta learn to move with 'em." The mentor shrugged, causing their pupil to give them an irritated glare. *If only it were that easy*, Raziel thought to himself. Envello grinned, seeming to realize the reason for their student's disdain, "It really is that easy," they chuckled and leaned back into their chair.

"Tell me," the Ether mentor continued, inspecting their nails, "do ya have something in your life that makes ya want to change?" they asked, "Something that motivates ya to become better?"

A black furred CCCat with a fluffy striped tail briefly came to Raziel's mind. The way their body had flowed and swung with a heavenly grace as they danced to the music that played softly through a radio, contrasted heavily with the dejected and downtrodden look they had taken on in the past few weeks. Raziel recalled the way their hair fell into their face, their ears dropped, and the particles from their crowns and tail floated into the air with an unusual slowness as they sat hunched over with an eerie stillness. It brought a pang of sadness to the white CCCat.

"I have a uh... a friend," the student said with an unusual shyness.

"Oh?" Envello asked with a sly smile, "Someone ya care about, ey?" Raziel shrugged, "I suppose..." He said and looked down shyly. His mentor gave a hearty chuckle.

"Ay," they began, leaning back into the chair, "Doin' things for tha' people y'care about is one of the strongest motivations." Envello smiled warmly as they looked up to the sky. "It may not make much sense," they started again, looking down towards their pupil, "but whenever ya feel the air start to move outta yer' way, think of that friend 'a yours. Remember how you want to be there for 'em." The Ether mentor waved their hand, "Do that, and try again." They nodded to their student.

Raziel sighed and turned his attention back towards the spot he had been focused on. He took a moment to center himself and began again. His awareness came to a circle of air he manifested and corralled into an orb. He followed the steps that had been outlined in the textbooks Envello had made him read, watched as his magic moved the weave of the air in the orb into place, just as he had seen his mentor do before.

I can do this, Raziel thought to himself as he caused the molecules of air to pop and fizzle and change. When they began to try and spring away, the CCCat thought of Ravyn and how they had collapsed into his arms, clinging to him as their body shook with sobs and fear. Determination set in and Raziel concentrated hard, spinning the weave back into place.

I will protect them, Raziel chanted to himself, *I have to*. He grit his teeth as he strained against the pulsating molecules trying to defy him. *I won't let them get hurt again*, he pushed the orb of air into place funneling his magic into it, *I won't let them get hurt again, I can't*. The CCCat growled lightly, *I won't let **anyone** get hurt again-*

"Stop." A surprisingly commanding voice spoke from behind him and Raziel was yanked from his thoughts. He brought his awareness back to the orb of air in front of him and quickly cut off the flow of magic. The darkened color of the weave of air within the orb was strange to the CCCat.

"I'm pretty sure that wasn't what you were tryin' to do," Envello spoke again from behind Raziel, their voice uncharacteristically serious for once, "but make sure you git a good look at it." They commanded their student who studied the orb as it slowly dissipated and the weave returned to its natural state.

"What was that?" Raziel asked quizzically, his hands dropping to the floor.

"Were we in *different* company," the Ether mentor said as they got up from the chair and approached their student, "ya coulda killed someone with that." Raziel was startled.

"Wait what?" He asked with concern.

"That was a bubble of air with all the oxygen removed," Envello explained and crossed their arms, "woulda suffocated anythin' within that needed it t'breathe."

"Oh my..." Raziel whispered, suddenly feeling very scared. His mentor placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder, the strange fizzle of their defect somehow warm and comforting.

"No need ta beat yourself up, kid." They said calmly, "No one was hurt, and now ya know how ta do it so ya can avoid it in the future." Raziel looked at the floor, wondering how he could have done that when he was trying to do something completely different. "Mistakes happen, Raziel," Envello said with a comforting smile, "remember what happened an' learn from it. Ether magic is a precise thing and can change quickly." the mentor instructed and their student looked up at them. Envello smiled and Raziel sighed.

"I guess I've still got a long way to go..." He said dejectedly. His mentor laughed heartily, "Ay! Such is the way of life." They came to stand in front of their student, "Let me show ya where ya went wrong, an' how ta fix it next time." Envello said with a smile.