

Astril struggled to walk through the windy meadow atop of the high mountain. They had made their way up here at the suggestion of Giyas, who recommended they meet with the wind magic mentor Thes. Unfortunately however their long journey was not yet finished. Astril looked up, putting their hands above their eyes to see past the glaring sun.

Above then stood floating islands, their origin unknown, but many believe they were kept afloat with wind magic. While a wondrous sight to behold, for someone like Astril, it posed a real pain in the ass. The floating islands was where Thes called home, and only those who had either wings, or a Gravant buddy were able to make their way to the floating islands. Unfortunately Astril had neither. They did have a friend who was a Gravant, however Astril was sure they wouldn't really want to help them, especially not after the two got into a fight.

Nonetheless Astril didn't come here without a plan. Astril, being atop of the mountain near the floating islands, was now much closer than ever, as they grabbed their lasso hanging from their belt. Normally they'd use this to lasso up any Smol Beans that were acting up, but now it was their one way ticket to Thes.

Astril looked up at the floating island just above them, they took a deep breath in before lifting up their lasso, they quickly started to swing it around, gaining momentum, and while still holding the end they threw it up, hoping to catch something on the island. It took a few attempts, but soon the lasso latched onto something. Astril gave it a good few tugs, making sure it was secure, and once they were sure it wouldn't give out, they started to climb.

The wind blew them around some, but thankfully it wasn't enough to knock them off. And so they continued to climb swiftly, and eventually Astril made it to the top. Astril quickly dug their claws into the ground, dragging themselves from the edge of the island onto the grass. Soon they got to their feet and brushed off the dirt and grass from their jacket and fur.

Astril looked up at the landscape around them, the island was a vast meadow, with occasional shrubs and small trees. Surprisingly the wind was not nearly as strong up here, as if there was a sort of bubble over top of the island. Astril detangled their lasso from a shrub that it managed to snag, and placed it back on their belt.

Off in the distance Astril saw what looked like a small in-hill cottage, it seemed that Thes was closer than Astril thought. Astril wasted no time walking over, taking in the clean crisp air and strange flora on these magical islands. Astril soon found themselves at the door of Thes, and before they could even raise their hand to knock, the door had opened quickly, causing Astril's fur to stand on end. There stood Thes, he looked around for a moment before looking down and noticing Astril.

“Oh, there you are, you're rather short you know.” He said as he turned to walk back into his home. Astril's ear twitch in annoyance, and it looked like they wanted to rebuttal, but Thes soon spoke again. “Well come, come, you may enter.” Thes said quickly. Astril sighed but complied, as they soon walked into Thes home.

Thes home was filled with books and trinkets, little treasures from around Skire. His bookshelves were bursting at the seams with all types of books, all placed in no particular order. The books seem to spill out into towers all around Thes house, some of them looking ancient. Along the walls were pictures and paintings, old relics mounted on the wall with pride, and they seemed well taken care of despite their age.

“You know you are a peculiar one, it's not often people are able to reach me up here. You must have a good reason to put so much effort into seeking me out.” Thes mumbled as he stood over his workbench, which seemed just as cluttered as his house.

Astril took a few steps closer before they spoke. “Giyas suggested I train with you to harness wind magic. He mentioned while training with me in fire magic that I seemed to have a gift for wind magic.” Astril said. Thes didn't look up from his work as he responded.

“Oh, Giyas you say? I haven't spoken with him in some time” Thes mumbled, not seeming to pay attention. Astril tried looking over Thes shoulder to see what he was doing that seemed more important than their conversation. Before Astril could get a good look, Thes had already turned around, with an object in hand, he tossed it at Astril.

Astril, not ready for the sudden object being thrown at them, was clocked straight in the head with a *thunk*.

“Ow! What the hell?!” Astril said as they rubbed their head. Thes only picked up the strange object, which was a hollow metal ball made out of rings.

“Oh, my bad, I should warn you next time. Catch” Thes said as he once again tossed the object at Astril. This time they looked up, and instead of getting hit in the head, they got hit in the face.

“Would you stop that?!?” Astril yelled. Thes only chuckled.

“Okay okay, sorry, that was kind of mean.” Thes said quickly waving his hand. “This is what I like to call an Air Ball, name still pending, but it's a device used to train in air magic, really more like a toy for beginners.”

Thes used his air magic around the Air Ball, causing the rings to start spinning, and soon, the ball was lifted slightly off of Thes palm as it spun. Using his air magic he was able to toss it around with ease, before catching it in his hand, this time he was kind enough to actually hand it to Astril this time.

Astril huffed a bit but took it this time, looking the device over, tracing their claws on the metal, studying it's design. It was pretty well crafted, it seemed Thes was good at his craft.

“Now, all you have to do is concentrate on the ball, focus your energy into it, think of it as weightless as a feather, and imagine it hovering.” Thes said as he gestured to the air ball. Astril took a deep breath, and tried to focus their magic on the ball. It took a moment, but the ball started to shake slightly. Astril tried to concentrate harder, holding their breath as they did so. Soon the ball started to rattle more, as it would jump slightly here and there, and Astril kept straining to try and funnel the wind magic into the ball, which was becoming visible as their face contorted as they stressed themselves more and more.

“now now, there's no need to hurt yourself trying-” Before Thes could finish, Astril gave off a grunt, and the Air Ball shot up quickly, hitting the roof with a loud thud, causing Astril to stumble back, tripping over a stack of books, causing them and the books to be sprawled out on the floor with a sharp yelp. It took Astril a minute to sit up, looking up at Thes, giving a small nervous smile.

“um... oopsies?” Astril said nervously, thinking they were in for a world of scolding. However Thes remained still for a moment, before bursting out into laughter.

“Oh my, I don't think I've seen that happen on a first attempt, what a performance!” Thes giggled before going over to help Astril up. “I must say, Gias wasn't lying when he said you have potential, wild, chaotic, and boundless, but still something we can harness into something usable.” Thes said as he started to stack the books back up.

“You're not... upset?” Astril asked, and Thes looked over at them, their head tilted slightly.

“Now why would I be upset? It would be like scolding a newborn for falling the first time they tried to walk.” Thes said as they put the last book onto the stack. “Besides, if I had a crown for every time a student had a mishap or accident I'd be retired by now.” Thes chuckled again, but he could still sense the tension from Astril.

“Look... no one is perfect when they start, even I struggled when I first started many years ago, so did the other mentors.” Thes said as he walked over to the bookcase and started to rummage through the many books on the shelf, eventually picking out the one he was looking for, giving it

a quick dust off as he walked over to his desk, placing it down and opening it up. He gestured for Astril to stand next to him, and Astril obliged, walking over next to Thes as they opened the old book.

“Don't go telling the other mentors I showed you this, but I feel like you need to see it. You see, not even us mentors, as strong as we are, were fluent in our respective fields of magic.” Thes flipped through the pages before stopping on one, he giggled slightly. Here's a picture of the time Giyas accidentally set Lux's tail on fire, and here's the time Briathan accidentally got his own foot stuck underneath a boulder.” Thes had to stop for a moment to laugh, and even Astril couldn't help but snicker a bit. “Oh, and this one's my favorite, the time Vetra accidentally froze Kol, to the point even his crowns were frozen, he couldn't move for a few hours, we ended up drawing on his face, ha! Of course he got the last laugh in the end when he used his magic to knock us into the lake, but it's still one of my favorite memories.” Thes said as he closed the book, putting it back on the shelf.

“My point is, even those who are good at what they do had to start somewhere. We all made mistakes, and so will you, it's inevitable.” He walked up to Astril and put a hand on their shoulder. “So don't beat yourself up for it, or think you'll be in trouble for trying, alright?” Thes said with a soft smile. Astril paused before nodding.

“Yeah... I'll try” Astril said softly, giving a smile in return.

“That's the spirit,” Thes said, patting them on the back. “Now then, as much as I'd love to continue to train, I'm rather busy today, but if you come back tomorrow I promise we can get started properly on your wind magic training.” Thes said as he led Astril out of his home. “Just remember, my training comes with a fee, crowns will work, but if you ever have some neat trinkets or dohickey keys laying around I'll happily accept those as well” Thes said with a chuckle as he walked outside with Astril, escorting to the edge of the island.

“Will do, though, you are going to help me down though... right?” Astril asked, looking down over the edge.

“Nonsense! You got up here, you can get yourself down, think of this as part of your training, free of charge, down you go now!” Thes said and he gave Astril a shove, pushing them off the floating island and down into the forest below. Astril let out a loud scream, cursing out Thes on their way down.

“They'll be fine...” Thes said, watching Astril fall, and eventually land in a tree. “Yeah, they'll be fine.” Thes said as he turned to make his way back to his home. As he entered he noticed the Air

Ball still sitting on the ground. He went to pick it up, but received a small shock when he went to touch it. His hand recoiled slightly, he was surprised, but he soon smiled.

“It seems fire and air aren't the only things you have affinity for Astril” Thes said with a smile, he looked forward to seeing Astril tomorrow..