

In The Pages

It suffocates me.
The world.
The hate. The greed. The anger. The hurt.
It suffocates me.

But in the pages...I find refuge from danger.
In the pages...I am saved.
In the pages...the world is gone.

A new one emerges.
Saviors in the form of princes and dragons.
A princess saving herself.
A mermaid finding her song.
A villain understood.
Hate defeated.
Greed defeated.
Anger defeated.
Hurt defeated.
The real evils withdrawn.

As a child, my closet was my safe place.
Hidden from the world that I existed in,
I found a new world in the pages.
In my world, I heard screams and fights and crying and insults.
In the pages, I was brave. I was cared for. I was safe.
No longer the ugly duckling, but a swan.

In the pages, I found my friends.
Krisy with her Great Idea and Anne with her mistaken hair.
Jeff Greene making himself into an island,
Oh that was my dream.
An island...where no hate or pain could reach me.
Karana avenging Ramo but loving Rontu
An island of blue dolphins all on her own,
Fighting and growing stronger each day,
Never losing hope in a new dawn.

In the pages, Mary and Dickon find the magic in the secret garden,
me with them
Saving Collin and Craven and learning to smile and cry.
Sara finds the magic even after her father is gone,
and I knew that I too, was a little princess,
as the stories saved me with their magic.
Terabithia was built, the magic left for May Belle to cross the bridge
When Leslie no longer could.
I cried with Jess and built my own wreath for Leslie in my closet.
In the pages, there was magic to heal wherever the ink was drawn.

As a teenager, I built my own refuge,
hiding from anxiety, bullies, heartbreak, and my own demons.
The school library
had an alcove and in that alcove
I found my refuge again and again.
The books were my fortress, the words my sword and shield.
No one could harm me, not even the thoughts I would dwell on.

In the pages, I battled with Rose and Lissa, killing their Strigoi, along with mine.
Arthur Weasley showed me that a father could love his children,
even if mine didn't.
I fought the dementors with Harry, Ron, and Hermione, a found family,
A family of love, they became my family.
I found my own patronus, with my happy thoughts.
My most happy thought.
In the pages, that is where I found my happy thoughts.
Like Peter and Wendy, I could fly to Neverland
And fight back the dark abyss that always seemed to
consume my mind, my skin to draw on.

In the pages, I met Elizabeth and wept as she told of her mother, Anne Boleyn,
I cried with Marc Antony as he screamed for Cleopatra, his love,
Taking his own life for fear of life without her.
Juliet took me through a rollercoaster, a girl who just wanted
to love and be loved, but a girl nonetheless.
Caught in a power struggle, bartered as a good.
Miriam and Laila, never good enough with the audacity to be born a woman
In the time of the Taliban.
I began to see how words were used to fight
the hate, the greed, the anger, the evil.
Lily stands up to her father, finding a family in the broken pieces
of August, June, and May.
Resonated with May's words
"It's your time to live. Don't mess it up."
My life changed and the walls I built began to crumble
And to them I wrote a Dear John.

In the pages, I saw Jaime get her miracle in Landon
and feel the words every time I feel the wind.
Hazel and Gus making a choice when the world
gave them none.
Audrey Rose stood up to all who defied her,
Determined to be both "pretty and fierce.."
Hermione, Alaska, Jo, Katniss, Matilda, Lena
The world told me no,
the pages told me yes.
Strength, love, power, confidence are
found in the pages, the abyss no longer the paragon.

The world will always have pain, hate, greed, and evil
and in the pages, we see its toll.

Tris, sacrificed.

Katherine, beheaded.

Joan of Arc, burned at the stake.

Edna, swallowed by the gulf.

Cedric Diggory, the spare.

The ink spells out the pain,

Visceral and raw cutting deep

Deeper than the tears of the ocean

Odysseus fought swirled with the Siren's song

But in the pages

The battle is fought, though not always won

Fantasy becomes reality, showing the lessons of this hard world.

The pain is eased, but not always gone

In the pages

I found myself, lost and alone, surrounded by darkness.

The ink formed words, whispered through the air

and pulled me out, ready to face the world.

In the pages

I will always find a door or a window,

a way to the worlds painted through the novel,

a warrior, a princess, a love, a beast, a siren, a nymph

Or just a girl dealing with life.

In the pages

Family, friends, adventure, romance,

Hardship, pain, death, life

All can be found

...in the pages.