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Telling the Wind and Fire; Words and Their Impact on My Life

The lights of the tattoo parlor were dim as I attempted to get myself comfortable on the bench. This in itself was a struggle considering I've had a downright phobia of needles since before I could remember. Coinciding with my anxiety surrounding the tattooing instrument, there was my mother's voice resounding in my head- "Don't get something stupid that you'll regret later! Remember, your favorite song will change and seeing it in the mirror will make you cringe in a few years!" Strangely enough, it was these words that made me relax and give the artist a thumbs up to start on the words that would be etched between my shoulderblades forever.

It wasn't the words to my current jam that I was inking into my skin, but a shortened line from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens- "Tell the Wind and Fire". Ever since I read the book my sophomore year of highschool, the words had become my mantra. A small, quiet bookworm whose growing up revolved around school and her library card, 'underestimated' became a pretty constant state of how I was perceived. When I read the full phrase in chapter twelve of Dickens' work, I was suddenly awestruck. The scene comes as Madame Defarge blows through all of the limitations that could have ever hoped to hold her and exclaims, "Then tell the Wind and Fire where to stop; but don't tell me."

My heart stopped. My world as I knew it was torn away with printed ink on a page.

I can't claim to relate to Madame Defarge's character in much else but that line, but I couldn't unsee that new connection between her words and the ones that I was too scared to

scream myself. I wanted to live in a way that had less limitations than the forces of nature. I wanted people to see the power I held with my pens and paper and not use my silence to underestimate me.

I knew it then— words would forever be my siren song.

I had always been a reader and a writer. One fell into the other like coins into a fountain and I couldn't wait for the day when I could cash in on it and build the future that I dreamed of.

More than the chorus reverberating through my body that words had become, they held a place as the very blocks of what made me, me. Letters had become dear friends, phrases made faithful family, and the characters in novels served as my idols and steadfast teachers.

Reading and writing opened me to this world of being limitless in every sense of the word.

I became limitless in love. When the world became too much and it felt as if the Wind and Fire that I had sought so hard to defy were trying to snuff me out in their smoke, books readily offered their pages for shelter. In their strong binding, my weary heart could rest. Their prose rhythmically stroked my back as they lulled me into a renewed sense of hope with their 'happily ever after'. The embrace of books became the most comfortable place in the world when everything else felt abrasive.

I became limitless in passion. Each page I read made me burn for more. Each word I wrote made me ache for just five more minutes, just *one more line*. In every book I picked up, I vigorously searched for myself. I picked away for every little piece that would snap into place within me and I lived for the chance at its discovery.

I became limitless in myself. Characters that had fought dragons and defied death had cheered me on to find my own boldness— and I did. I became unafraid of the endless space that my words were capable of taking up. I created and created, wrote and wrote until it was unclear where my life's blood ended and the ink began. When this was the case, how could I not combine the two?

Lying on that bench, the needle wasn't nearly as painful as I had built it up in my mind. But the words that I had chosen became all the more poignant. Literature and writing had taught me how to become a fiercer force than the Wind and Fire. Beyond that, they had taught me how to harness those forces and put them into ink.

This ink that now places the Wind and Fire at my back forever, blazing bright and impossible to underestimate, pushing me forward into greatness. Into a destiny that is lined with pens waiting to be picked up and pages flying open to be read.