

Words have power. That much is undeniable. They can build and they can destroy. They heal and they wound. They bring joy and they bring despair. Words can completely change a person's reality. Any word uttered by any being has that potential. Add a dash of magic to that, and this becomes even more true.

I learned that early.

After I discovered I could add that dash of magic, I began to feel the potential of the words more fully. So much power sat just at the tip of my tongue. It was hard sometimes not to let it loose, just to see what it would do, but I learned to resist. I had heard stories of people with such abilities pushing the magic a little to far and finding nothing but regret at the other end.

Granted, it wasn't long before I learned to infuse the magic into song and dance, too. Such arts are practically magic on their own. But I preferred the words, and words and stories became my friends, in a strange way. The potential was always in the back of my mind, and I found a sort of comfort in that.

And then that mark appeared.

It was all too strange, and there was much questioning of my heritage among the few I talked with. Then I accessed the power sleeping in the mark, and things became even more strange. The potential that always sat waiting in the back of my mind began to move. As I tried to sleep, the soft mutterings of the crew found me and took shape. All those words, half heard and unspoken alike, began to wriggle and almost take invisible form. I was certain I was going mad.

That night, I dreamt of creatures made entirely of words, each demanding my attention. They came in all sizes, all shapes. Small, large, crawling, lumbering, skittering, flying, frenzied, sluggish, all there. The potential had seeped into some of them. Those ones crowded in, ever closer, urging me to just use them, to set them free, make them tools, make them weapons, anything.

When I woke, they were still there. No longer visible, no longer physical, but I could feel them all the same. Where once sat quiet, ever-present potential, was a squirming tangle. However, I had adapted to strange things before. I had to believe I could adapt to this.

I had to hope this wasn't a gift from the Traveler.