

I am a collector of words. Big or small, round or flat, I hoard them all. I tuck them in books and pockets. I store them in notebooks and drawers. Occasionally, I jot them on my skin in hopes of never forgetting how they sounded when spoken, the way they danced and twirled across my tongue. Each word speaks to me, filling me with wonder while sparking my imagination. I close my eyes and glimpse them through the darkness. I weave them into my speech, crafting each sentence with the greatest of care, knowing how much power every word contains.



Author's Note:

The inspiration for this story came from the prompt: *The Most Interesting Word*. There are many interesting words out there, and each time I learn a new one, I seem to find it everywhere. Picking a single word to write about left me staring off into space, mulling over which word I might choose, and before I knew it, the following snippet formed itself. And without entirely meaning to, I wrote a portion of how I feel about words. The simple joy of watching them line up and form beautiful sentences.

I'm not alone on this front. Meet-ups with fellow writers often comprise a lot of yammering about words. Sometimes specific words, and other times about the way we've woven them together. Sometimes we might read pieces and ask for feedback, other times someone might comment on how they read a piece, and it took their breath away. I suppose it may seem strange to some, to think of people speaking of words as though they've found their best friend or perfect soul mate, and yet we exist.

Far more words cover the walls in my home than photos. From the large quote walls to seasonal pieces above the piano. Another in the stairwell. One above the sink, some adorn the bathrooms. I've placed some above bedheads, more on the back of doors, ironed on totes, and displayed across the front of my notebooks. Without meaning to, I seem to have collected words, and each time I see one hanging on the wall, I smile. Not just because the

words make my heart sing, but because all of them conjure a memory that seems to write itself.

The Reluctant Author.

