

Mirrors

Words are powerful, and you know that. Each time, the echoes of the words you have heard sweep you across every obstacle you have ever faced. It all started with your father. The chorus of his pristine tone as he read you a bedtime story. His smile and mellow voice cut through the edge of the dimly lit room you first called home. He kissed your cheek softly as he rolled the duvet over your shoulders and wished you a good night. He said the exact words every night, those you always looked forward to – "I love you, Phoenix." Those words were everything, and you believed the bed monsters would strike before dawn if he failed to tell you.

But tonight is not like other nights. The sweet loving from twenty years ago is gone. Not even the memories of your father's words or your grandma's broad smiles, grinning widely as she admired the birthday card you made for her. It was your first attempt at painting. You created a drawing of your grandma, with an impression of the corals she wears on her neck with small circles, which made her smile so bright and declared, "You are the best!" Those words do not matter right now. For all you care, you are the imperfect person, which is everything but being "the best." You are torn between the imperfections that stare at your face each time you look at the mirror or when you dare to take a selfie from your phone. It feels like every filter you apply amplifies your flaws. Even you would not want to be friends with yourself.

It's still bright outside, but it is intensely dark inside. You lay paralyzed on your bed, unable to move a finger as the weights of your weaknesses hold you down. But maybe they are not weaknesses; perhaps they are differences, but who cares? Right now, the words of your father or grandma do not matter, but what society says to you. They say you must dream, but make your dreams small, and don't even reach too high whenever you aim. You feel you are falling off from every setting, becoming a misfit by the day. Your standards are too high for everyone else, and no one seems to understand the ideas in your head. You are beginning to think it is time to throw in the towel. You can be the regular person, like everyone else. That could be how it was meant to be; why should you aim for more when everyone is just fine with little?

But you hear some other words. This time, it is not that of your father or your grandma. These words come from a different voice, and you know what they mean each time they come. They are not too loud that they shut you up, but not so quiet that you cannot hear them:

"Who says you should be limited by the definitions of others?"

Slowly, you begin to feel strong again. You start feeling blood flow again to your face, and your heart becomes warm. Soon, you are figuring out the difference between you and the others. It's right there in those words. Your drive is different, your motivation is unique, and you are not trying to beat or join them. You are in a race with yourself, improving and advancing each day. You are creating a different path, a new route others can follow, a new height others would reach for. There is only one authentic voice, and that is the one you can hear right now. You have never been in the box; your thoughts have always shattered every box. You have never been what you look like, but what you think, pursue, aim, and determine. The many paths you have blazed have become the road others aspire to follow.

Words are powerful, and you know that. Today you have found the word which one describes you, Maverick.