

“Do We Really Have To Do This Again?”

by F.R. Southerland

[#Fictober18 \(October 2018\) writing challenge](#)

Day 30: “Do we really have to do this again?”

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If Aaron had it his way, he'd have nothing more to do with Charlie. He'd tried before—gods knew he did—but it always ended in frustration. He was to the point now that further attempts at reconciliation were better left as wishful thinking. He'd given Charlie a chance. That was all anyone could expect of him.

But Jamie had asked. The thought to ignore him had crossed his mind—tempting, real fucking tempting—and he would've, if Jamie hadn't looked so worn-down, jaded.

“Fuck,” he muttered under his breath.

Jamie just took a long drag on his cigarette and watched the smoke drift away from them. He finally found words, after a minute or two of tense silence passed between the brothers. “No one's forcing you.”

Aaron let out a breath and shoved his hands into the pockets of his leather jacket. “Yeah, but you ain't giving me much of a fucking choice either.” The temptation to leave was growing stronger with each passing minute, and each passing minute grew closer to Charlie's arrival. Aaron flicked his eyes toward the street.

“Do we really have to do this again? I don't want to argue. I don't want to fight.”

“Shit. Neither do I, but you know how shit is with us. How its always been—it ain't gonna end well.”

Jamie knew all about that. Charlie's release from prison was one of the main reasons Aaron left home—saying nothing of their mother's abuses. “It might, if you don't blow up about shit.” When Aaron shot a glare at him, Jamie ignored it and continued, “Just saying. Dad's not a bad guy. He's not the villain.”

Aaron gave a snort of derision. He didn't know what it was like, to have been told all of his childhood that his father was a terrible person, that he'd never wanted him, to have that memory somewhere in the back of his head of a man full of rage, and seeing very little evidence to support anything else. He hadn't even wanted to give him a chance, but he had, despite his reservations.

He should stop letting his family talk him in to shit.

Exhaling a deep sigh, he flicked the remainder of his cigarette away from him. “Whatever. I'm fucking done. I'm out.”

“Aaron—”

He'd only walked a few paces before he saw him, his father, coming up the sidewalk. Too fucking late to do any good. Aaron gave Charlie a look, glanced back over his shoulder at his brother, then headed across the street and away from him.

Jamie wished he wasn't so resistant. There were a lot of unresolved issues wrapped up in Aaron's stubbornness that prevented them from moving further. It was a sad fact.

Charlie crossed the parking lot to stand with Jamie, gaze following Aaron's retreating form. “Again?”

“Yeah.” Jamie sounded as morose as he felt. “But he stuck around longer than I thought he would.” He offered a cigarette from his pack to Charlie. “I tried to get him to stay.”

“It's progress,” Charlie said, tone quiet as he took the proffered cigarette. “Slowly but surely.”

Jamie wasn't so sure.