

“Remember, You Have To Remember”

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

Day 27: “Remember, you have to remember.”

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“There’s nothin’. Don’t you see? Can’t you see the nothin’?”

“I see it.”

She saw a man—a demon, she reminded herself—in the midst of a complete breakdown. A memory flashed in her head from a couple years ago, to the first time she’d witnessed it. This was much the same. His eyes were just as wide and bold, pupils blown. His hair was mussed and there was an unwashed odor about him. She realized, with a pang, that he’d been like this for days.

“Good. Good,” he murmured, absently. His eyes were unfocused and Andy knew he was looking not at her, but at her aura humming around her. “If you can see, an’ I can see it—we got no worries.”

She had no clue what he was talking about, but she let him ramble. Slowly, she stepped close to him and reached out for his arm. From past experience, she knew she could ground him with a little physical contact—a touch to the arm, the shoulder, the face.

He recoiled back from her. The sound that came from him was nothing human—guttural and raw, a growl that made her flinch back.

“No! No! Don’t—don’t touch. Don’t look. Don’t feel. Nothin’. M’nothin’.” He pressed himself back against the wall, sinking down to sit on the floor. His fingers gripped tightly to his hair—so tight Andy feared he might literally rip it out.

She knew what was happening here. She had also seen it before. His grip on reality had slipped. There was no way to know how, but it didn’t matter. Andy edged forward, crouching when she was near enough to him. His previous reaction made her hesitant, but she pushed through it to touch his wrist.

This time, the soultaker didn’t shy away. His skin was cold, as it always was. Andy ignored the numbness biting into her fingers and gently drew his hand away. Fingers untangled from his hair and went limp. He lifted his face to her and this time, his eyes were focused on her.

Andy offered a small smile. “You’re not nothing.”

“But I am—I am. I know. There’s me and there’s another me. And the me I am now—” He shook his head, words cutting off. He whimpered instead.

“Shh, shh.” She stroked her fingers through his hair, smoothing back the unruly strands. “You are you. You’re here. This is real. Remember that? Remember me?”

She didn't know if she had his focus or not, but she kept talking in a soft, soothing voice. "You have to remember. I know you can."

The silence that followed unnerved her, so she filled the gap with other words of encouragement, quietly spoken. Her fingers continued combing through his hair.

And then he shifted his weight and looked at her. Cold fingers slipped between hers and gripped tightly—far too tightly than was comfortable, but Andy didn't protest or complain. She squeezed back. That was encouraging.

His eyes were clear, focus finally there. "M'fine now, love," he said, voice lower than usual, tired.

She didn't believe he was fine. He'd never been fine. But at least he was there now, and that was a big step forward.