

“Try Harder, Next Time”

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

Day 13: “Try harder, next time”

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It was easier not to ask how Mason had gotten the shipping containers into the middle of the desert. Teleportation came to the half-demon as easily as breathing and it was no stretch of the imagination to think he just zapped several of the two and a half ton structures there.

Good for him. And also, thank the gods that wasn't the lesson today—at least, she hoped Mason wouldn't switch it up, out of the blue. She wouldn't put it past him, and her teleportation skills did need touching up.

The containers, three of them, were stacked in a simple pyramid formation. Andy eyed them before she turned to face her mentor. “So... what's the goal?”

Mason stood, legs shoulder width apart with his hands folded in front of him. “Simple enough. Move them.”

“Move them. Got it.”

A shipping container was probably the biggest thing she'd ever attempted to move, but she was confident. If she could shove back several cars in a single burst, it should be easy to displace a container. Andy rubbed her hands together, drawing her attention to the topmost shipping container. It began to shift as she focused her ability and—

“All of them.”

The top container thumped when it landed, slightly askew. “What?” Lifting one two and a half ton shipper was one thing, but three? “You're fucking kidding me.”

“I most certainly am not.” Indeed, Mason's stoic expression gave no hint to a joke.

Andy gave a little laugh. “Wow, okay.” She shook out her hands and braced herself, taking a defensive stance. She could do this. She could lift all three at once. No big deal. Just nearly eight pounds of metal all at once.

She felt the pressure building behind her eyes, tightness that she let out. It encapsulated the three containers. The metal creaked and groaned and it lifted a few inches, then a foot, off the ground. It took more effort than Andy had anticipated and her grasp on it slipped.

With a gasp, she let go. The shipping containers fell, ground shaking. Her breath came out fast. Something warm and wet touched her upper lip and she wiped away the wetness. Blood. Great.

Andy immediately looked away from the smear of red on her thumb and her eyes fell on Mason, still

standing there so calmly.

“Try harder. Next time.”

Of course. He would view it as a simple task, one that just required more effort, more strength. No real encouragement there, no flowery words. Just cold, factual instruction.

“Yeah, that never occurred to me.” The mocking in her tone was hard to miss. Wiping away more of the blood from her nose, she turned back to the containers.

Her resolved strengthened, Andy held her ground once more. This time, she stretched out her arms, fingers splayed wide. The shipping containers shook, rattled, then they lifted. Once again, they reached about a foot from the earth before Andy started to feel her grip loosening.

No, not this time. She would not fail.

The pain burned behind her eyes. Her head throbbed. Her body shook. The containers lifted higher. They had to be a good ten feet from the ground now and holding steady. More blood trickled down from her nose and dripped off her lip.

Andy closed her hands into tight fists.

The metal squealed and groaned, then crunched loudly when it crumpled inward like discarded soda cans and fell, heavily back to the ground.

Panting, Andy lowered her arms and a proud smile stretched across her face. She didn't even mind the taste of blood on her lips nor the pain pounding in her forehead. She'd done it.