

remember

me

a game of
identity and
memory for
two
by kate bullock

where
are you?

i love



This game is dedicated to all of us whose trauma has shattered our ability to form and recall memories. To those of us who can only remember the emotions of a situation and not what happened. Who have complete parts of our life we can no longer remember. To those of us who have lost part of who we are because our memory no longer functions.

To people like me.

Writing, design, and layout by Kate Bullock

Stock photos by Engin Akyurt, Fillipe Gomes, Suzy Hazelwood, Ruslan Alekso, Heorhii Heorhiichuk, Tatiana Djakova

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Memories are fallible and precious. They define us, but are often inaccurate. Every time we remember something, we change our own memories. They can be rewritten, edited, and entirely deleted.



Memories are beautiful and harrowing. They can be full memories, with smells and colours and movement and sounds. They can be emotion memories, where we recall the emotion but not what's happening.

Memories are strange and unreliable. Yet we hold them dear to us. Without them, who are we? If we can no longer form solid memories, are we truly ourselves? How can we keep true to ourselves when we have no memory of who we are?

Boundaries

Remember Me is a two player game about recalling who we are from the perspective of others. Players offer memories to each other about the other's character, flesh out what that memory is about, and engage with the memory to see if there is any truth in it. The character then decides if they believe the memory and integrate into their identity, or if they deny the memory and let it haunt them.

This game plays with the way memories form who we are, and how the outside world can temper, modify, and change our understanding of who we are through memories. If playing with memories, their meaning, and how they interplay with identity is upsetting, triggering, or uncomfortable for you in a bad way, Remember Me is not a game you should play.

Memories can be fraught. Remember Me uses strong emotions to describe and talk about memories. These memories deal with normative conflict between two people who love each other. Remember Me is not inherently about abuse or harmful conflict, but can veer into that territory depending on the content the players decide upon. It is not the use or intent of Remember Me to be used as a therapeutic tool for processing harmful memories and we ask you do not use it this way.





Never In My Memory

Because memories can be intense, upsetting things, it's best to decide before you begin narrating what memories you don't have. Take an index card (one each) and write down content your memories do not have in them. These are things you do not want to hear about or believe happened in your memory. They are subjects that are off the table entirely. Title this list "Never in My Memory"

Once your list is ready, set it down between the two of you and talk about them to ensure everyone is on the same page. Promise to each other you will not use these themes in your memories. During play, if a Witness of Rememberer comes close to this content, tap the index card, shake your head, and say "Never in my memory." The Witness and Rememberer will change the content immediately and work together to get back to consensus on where to go.















Set Up

You will need:
Six sided die (2)
Index cards (16)
Writing tools (2)

Give each player one index card.

Choose a name for your character. Look at each other and say your names, out loud. Write the name you spoke on your index card.

Choose some of these (as many as you want) for your relationship:

-  Romantic love
-  Platonic love
-  Familial love
-  Sexual love
-  Broken love
-  Longing love
-  Unfulfilled love
-  Lasting love
-  Tense love
-  Forgotten love

Use these choices to decide who you are to each other. Tell each other what you love about the other, and what you dislike about the other. Write these traits down on your index card. Decide what you do, how that is part of your identity, and why you trust the person you love.

Divide the index cards between you.



Remembering

Decide who will be the first to hear a memory about them. They will become the Witness and will respond to the memory emotionally, and will ask questions to get more information until they feel they understand the memory. They will guide the memory's tone and content by asking leading questions and giving counterpoints to the Rememberer's memory. They will use the prompt to guide their questions and reframing of the Rememberer's narration.

The one telling the memory will become the Rememberer. They will talk about the memory from their perspective, answering questions and adding details based on the questions, and using their emotion to help guide and frame the memory. They will do all they can to convince the Witness that the memory is true and genuine. They will use their prompt to set the memory and tell the Witness what happened.






Each will roll on a list to discover the emotion that will help frame the memory. The Rememberer will begin narration with the Witness adding their questions and thoughts. The Rememberer will answer, change, and distort the memory until there is nothing more to add or ask.

The Witness will then Reject or Integrate the memory. Then their roles will switch.






"Memories are dangerous things. You turn them over and over, until you know every touch and corner, but still you'll find an edge to cut you."

- Mark Lawrence,
Prince of Thorns

Scared






-  "You frightened me when you..."
-  "I was scared because of... And you did..."
-  "I never thought I'd see you like that. You frightened me because..."
-  "It wasn't supposed to happen this way, and that scared me..."
-  "I was afraid of... and you made it..."

Frustrated

-  "I can't believe you..."
-  "You wouldn't listen to me even though I..."
-  "Nothing was going how it was supposed to, and you..."
-  "This happened every time you..."
-  "Nothing I did mattered, because you..."



Confused

-  "I know what you said, but then you..."
-  "I trusted you, and you lied when..."
-  "I could never understand why you..."
-  "None of it made sense, but I had the proof that you..."
-  "Why wouldn't you believe me when I..."






The Rememberer

The Rememberer rolls **1d6** to decide an emotion for the memory. Then chooses one prompt from the corresponding list. They use these prompts to begin to frame a memory about the witnessing character.






Roll **1d6**:

- 1** - Scared
- 2** - Frustrated
- 3** - Confused
- 4** - Loved
- 5** - Hurt
- 6** - Proud






Loved

-  "When you made an effort to be there for me..."
-  "It was an important moment and we shared it together..."
-  "I felt safe with you when..."
-  "You protected me from..."
-  "You made sure I knew you loved me when..."

Hurt

-  "You deliberately hurt me when you..."
-  "I couldn't believe you would do that to me..."
-  "You ignored what I needed so you could..."
-  "Nothing I wanted mattered when you..."
-  "You only thought about yourself when you..."

Proud

-  "We finally did what we said we would when we..."
-  "I saw how important this was to you..."
-  "You accomplished what you wanted to when you..."
-  "I was thrilled to watch you succeed at..."
-  "You were amazing to watch...."



The Rememberer should begin to frame a scene around this prompt, and the feeling they had during the memory of their love. As they tell the memory, the Witness will ask questions. The Rememberer is encouraged to tell them they remember it wrong, to remind them of how it really was, and to keep their emotional point as the focus of the memory. They can twist the truth if they need to.

During Remembering, the Rememberer may reject a question or comment from the Witness because it is inappropriate, upsetting, troubling, or potentially harmful by saying "You aren't remembering it right." The Rememberer or Witness may then offer a different way to remember it that suits both their needs.



If the memory gets too intense for the Rememberer, they may say "That's all I remember" to end the memory and take a break. The Remembering stops immediately.

The Rememberer and the Witness may return if they wish, and start a new memory after switching roles. If either of them feel uncomfortable or no longer interested in the game, it is time to end the game.















"Memories are
bullets. Some
whiz by and
only spook you.
Others tear you
open and leave
you in pieces."

- Richard Kadrey,
Kill the Dead






Excited

-  "But I thought this was going to happen..."
-  "Weren't we doing something..."
-  "I remember it was exciting because..."
-  "Didn't you promise me..."
-  "We were about to talk about..."

Powerful

-  "Hadn't I just finished..."
-  "Was I celebrating something important like..."
-  "People were listening to me because..."
-  "I was doing something I had always dreamed..."
-  "Was I supporting you in some way like..."

Content

-  "It felt so good to be..."
-  "That was a good time for us when..."
-  "I finally had found something good..."
-  "I had worked so hard for that..."
-  "It felt safe when..."






The Witness

The Witness should roll 1d6 to gauge their emotional memory of what their partner is talking about. While they don't remember the details of what happened, they remember how they felt during that time. This emotion should help guide how they interact with what the Rememberer is telling them.






Roll 1d6:

- 1 - Excited
- 2 - Powerful
- 3 - Content
- 4 - Mad
- 5 - Weak
- 6 - Awful






Mad

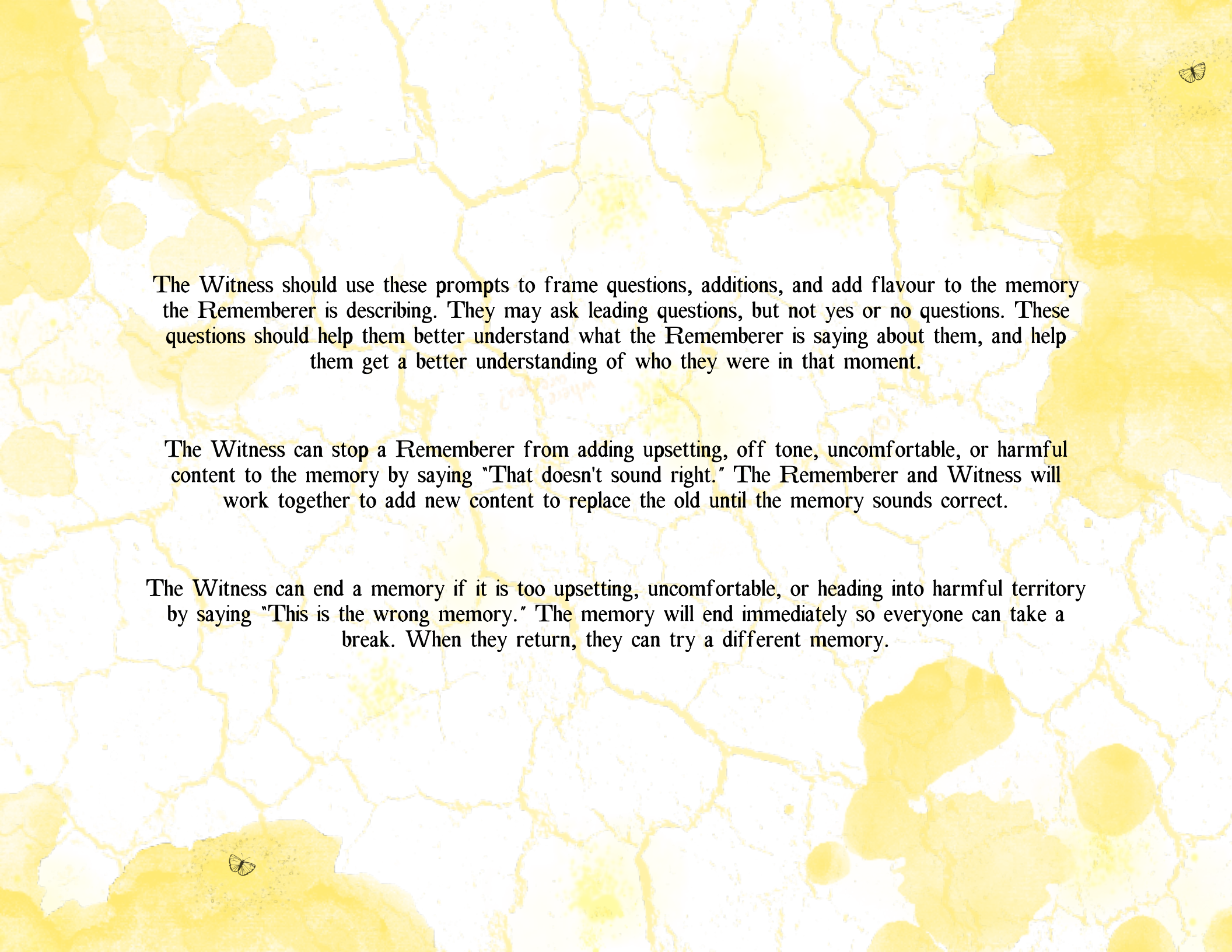
-  "Why was I so furious when you..."
-  "I can't believe that I let that..."
-  "They didn't deserve what they got when..."
-  "I deserved better than..."
-  "How could you treat me like that..."

Weak

-  "There was nothing I could have..."
-  "I was too ... to do anything about..."
-  "I didn't know what to do when..."
-  "I thought I had it in control..."
-  "Why didn't you protect me when..."

Awful


-  "That was such a terrible moment when..."
-  "Everything felt wrong when you..."
-  "I couldn't trust anyone because..."
-  "I knew everything would go wrong when..."
-  "No one would help me because..."

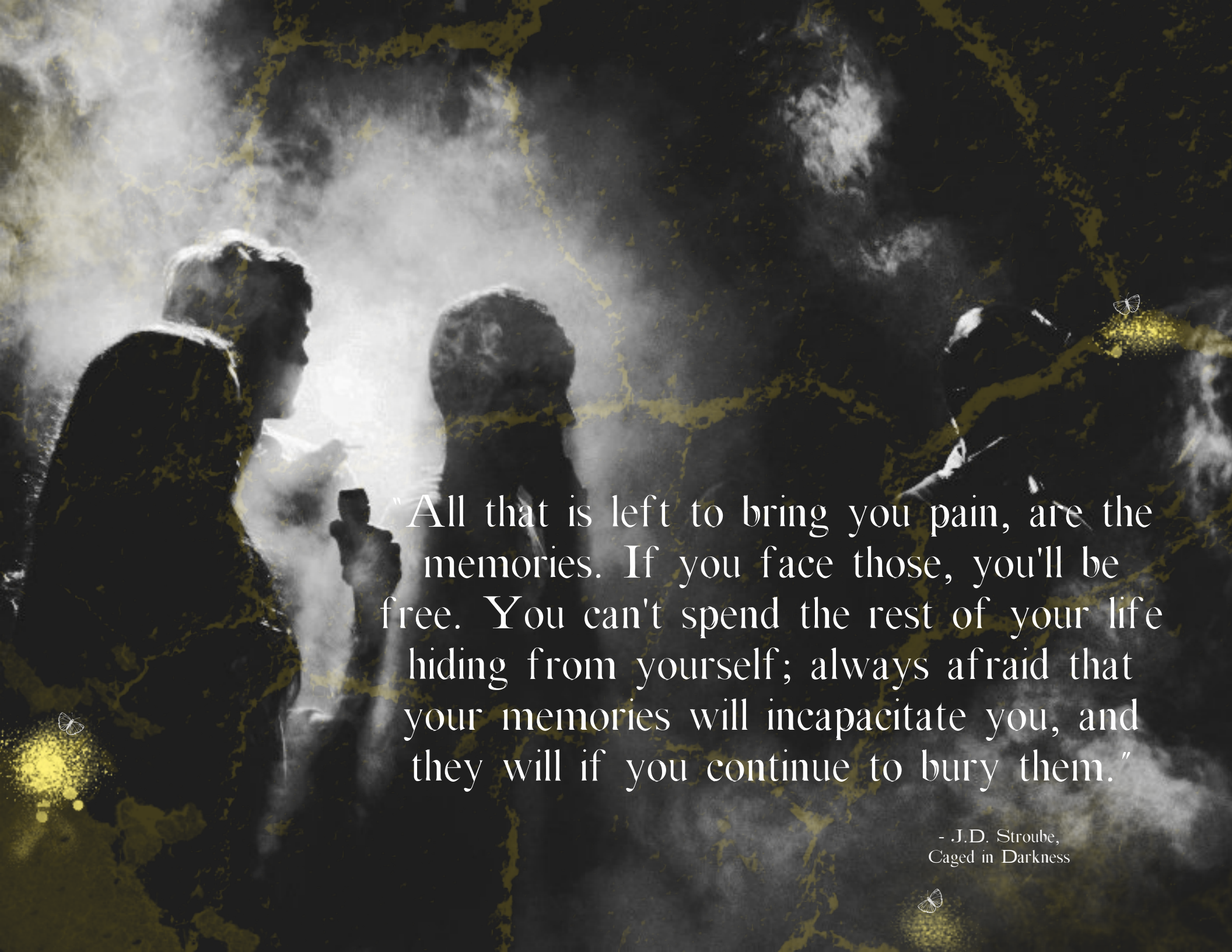


The Witness should use these prompts to frame questions, additions, and add flavour to the memory the Rememberer is describing. They may ask leading questions, but not yes or no questions. These questions should help them better understand what the Rememberer is saying about them, and help them get a better understanding of who they were in that moment.

The Witness can stop a Rememberer from adding upsetting, off tone, uncomfortable, or harmful content to the memory by saying "That doesn't sound right." The Rememberer and Witness will work together to add new content to replace the old until the memory sounds correct.

The Witness can end a memory if it is too upsetting, uncomfortable, or heading into harmful territory by saying "This is the wrong memory." The memory will end immediately so everyone can take a break. When they return, they can try a different memory.





"All that is left to bring you pain, are the memories. If you face those, you'll be free. You can't spend the rest of your life hiding from yourself; always afraid that your memories will incapacitate you, and they will if you continue to bury them."

- J.D. Stroube,
Caged in Darkness

Integration and Rejection

Once the memory is fully fleshed out and the Witness has no more questions, they have a choice to make. They may integrate the memory or reject it. Write a very short summary of the memory on one side of an index card.

If they integrate the memory, they say: "Thank you for reminding me." They then ask "Who does this make me?" to the Rememberer. The Rememberer will answer. Write that on the other side of the index card. The Witness should then answer the question "Who does this make them?" on the same side.

If they reject the memory, they say: "I don't believe you." And then ask "Who does this make me?" to the Rememberer. The Rememberer will answer and write that on the back of the index card. The Rememberer will then ask: "Why don't you believe me?" to the Witness. The Witness will answer and write that answer on the same side as the Rememberer's answer.

Integrated memories stay with the Witness. Rejected memories stay with the Rememberer.




Play switches back and forth until all the index cards are used.






Ending


The first Witness examines their pile of integrated memories and then shares who they believe they are based on those memories. Their Rememberer then tells them who they believe they are based on their rejected memories.



The Witness and Rememberer switch, and do the same for the second Witness.

Each Witness then thanks their Rememberer for their time, and decides if they will continue to be in a relationship with the Rememberer. Tell your Rememberer if you will continue a relationship with them, and why or why not.





"People leave
strange little
memories of
themselves behind
when they die."

Haruki Murakami,
Norwegian Wood






After

Throw your memories and characters in the garbage or recycling. Get a cup of tea or water, take a breath, and then sit down together to discuss the experience of talking through memories together.

Consider how it felt to be described by someone else in their memories, what it meant to integrate that information, and what it meant to reject it. Talk about how it felt to be defined by someone else's memory of you, and how it makes you consider the memories you have of yourself and others now.

Continue chatting until you feel you've spoken about the experience as much as you need to. Then thank each other and end the experience.



A Final Note

Memories are difficult for me. My high levels of cortisol from PTSD mean memory formation is difficult at best, and at other times, impossible. Trauma can do that to you. It makes memories, for some folks, really difficult.

I struggle to form lasting memories. This results in whole parts of my life being vague, emotional memories, meaning I can only recall how I felt, but I can't remember what was actually happening. My lack of knowledge around those memories means I must rely on others to keep them.

Those others have weaponized this against me in the past. When they say I've done something, I can't argue with them, so I must accept it and the consequences it comes with.

Some people I love help me keep truth and fear separated. Others have used this to gaslight me so they could easily manipulate me. And when I would reject what someone was telling me, the result would often be emotional abuse.

This game is inspired by this experience. The feeling of not truly knowing if something happened as it is being described to me, and knowing I'll just believe it. Knowing I have very little choice. My brain just believes people because it doesn't remember when they last hurt me.

This game does not emulate the emotional abuse I experienced, but rather, is designed to show how hard it is to know what is fact from fiction when you have no solid memory yourself.

Thank you for taking the time to play it and engage with some of the things I have experienced because of my history of trauma.