

Why Stories About Lost Emotion and Lost Choice Matter in 2025

By Richard French

In 2025, readers want more than fantasy that entertains. They are searching for stories that mean something. Stories that whisper truth through imagined worlds. Stories that feel uncomfortably close to the moment we are living in. Stories that make us pause long enough to ask a simple question. What is really happening to us?

A great deal has shifted in a short time. Across the world, power is concentrating, institutions feel strained, and many people quietly wonder how much influence they still have. We are watching leaders redraw boundaries faster than societies can respond. Beneath all of this, one question keeps returning.

What happens to our humanity when someone else decides what we are allowed to feel?

That question sits at the heart of my novel, *The Emotion Collector: Awakening*. It does not attempt to predict the future. Instead, it reflects a tension many people recognize today. A world slowly drifting toward emotional numbness and diminished choice, not through force, but through exhaustion.

When Fantasy Becomes a Mirror

The most thought-provoking fantasy does not rely on spectacle. It follows you out of the story and into your own world. You close the book and realize the fiction feels strangely familiar.

That sense of recognition is everywhere right now.

People are worn down by constant crises. Outrage has become background noise. Emotional energy is depleted. When society becomes this tired, numbness can feel like relief. And numbness, once adopted, turns into a quiet surrender of agency and empathy.

In *Awakening*, that surrender becomes the foundation of an entire society built on the promise of peace achieved through emotional suppression.

“Emotion is chaos,” the Council insists. “And chaos is the enemy of order.”

The idea sounds reasonable. Control often does.

But reason without humanity becomes something colder. Something efficient enough to replace freedom with compliance. And when genuine feeling disappears, choice becomes little more than a performance.

A World Where Feeling Is Forbidden

The world of *The Emotion Collector: Awakening* has traded far more than it understands. The people believe they have avoided pain and unpredictability by surrendering the full spectrum of human emotion. No grief. No longing. No wonder. No fear. A calm, curated version of existence.

What they have lost is far more significant.

Emotion is not the problem. Emotion is proof that we are alive.

When one person begins to feel again, the story does not ignite rebellion. It ignites recognition. The spark of identity. The return of self. And the danger of remembering something the Council cannot control.

Once you feel again, you begin to think again.

Once you think again, you begin to choose again.

That progression is what authoritarian systems fear most. Not outrage. Not defiance. Awakening.

Why This Story Belongs to 2025

Evidence of emotional suppression is already visible today. It appears quietly, in everyday behavior.

- People scroll past injustice because they do not have the energy to absorb another tragedy.
- Leaders normalize behavior that blurs the line between authority and control.
- Communities drift toward apathy because engagement feels heavy.

We are not losing emotion through force.

We are losing it through resignation.

Fantasy gives us the distance to look at these patterns honestly. It creates space to explore questions we often avoid.

- What happens when safety becomes a bargaining chip for freedom?
- What kind of society forms when empathy is treated as a liability?
- Who do we become when choice is reduced to routine compliance?

These questions are no longer theoretical. They are present.

Awakening Is More Than a Moment. It Is a Mirror.

In the novel, awakening is not simply the return of emotion. It is the rediscovery of an inner voice. The voice that tells you who you are and what you will or will not accept. When that voice returns, everything begins to shift.

“The first feeling isn’t courage or fear,” the protagonist reflects. “It’s recognition. The quiet understanding that this is mine.”

In a world wrestling with apathy, recognition is powerful.

Fantasy that encourages reflection does more than entertain. It restores something we often forget to protect. The right to feel fully and choose freely.

That is the heartbeat of *The Emotion Collector: Awakening*. It is not a story about overthrowing power. It is a story about reclaiming something essential. Emotion, empathy, and the ability to choose our own path.

And in 2025, that reminder feels less like escape and more like a necessary mirror.