

Title (up to 20 words) - Shattered Glass

Strapline (up to 40 words) - A story that is set in the first twin tower during the 911 attack in the year 2001.

Copy (between 900 and 1000 words) -

Uneasiness boiled in the bottom of my stomach like a pot of water that has been left over the stove. At any moment, it might just all boil over and I might just throw up. However, I didn't think much of it at first – I just put it down to nerves for the important business meeting that I was about to partake in. One wrong move and I could ruin the company's chances of getting a massive partnership. One wrong move and I could be fired.

Casting my gaze away from the ebony table beneath me, I took notice of the way the morning sun was shining through the clear glass window of the meeting room. My reflection mirrored every move of mine and I could see myself perfectly. My black hostess bun sat upon the top of my head comfortably with a few strands of hair falling over the edges of my hairline and the green necklace that brought the colour of my emerald-like eyes out rested on my collarbones. Instinctively, my right hand reached towards the jewellery, and I began to fiddle with the pendant that dangled off the silver chain,

remembering when my fiancé gifted it to me on our second anniversary.

Someone at the front of the long room cleared their throat and brought me out of my trance. Slowly, I turned my head to the side to look at the CEO, Mr Turner, who was about to start off the meeting brief. His outfit was formal looking, a deep navy blazer wrapped around his form and whenever he lifted his arms to make gestures the blazer would shift upwards slightly, some black-framed glasses were covering his beady, black eyes

so that he could watch his employees and guests intently.

Weird churning noises filled the air nearby, but it appears no one thought much of the strange sound as everyone continued to listen to the meeting; their attention on Mr Turner who was droning on in his monotone voice. Unknowingly, a quiet sigh left my lips as I propped my head up on my left hand causing a ring of red to surround my wrist from the pressure.

Suddenly a booming explosion ripped through the air coming from only a mere few floors below. Flickering lights blinked before shutting down completely as the skyscraper seemed to shudder at the sudden noise. Multiple people screamed whilst others flinched in their seats at the sudden issue at hand. Fire alarms blared through the air, their yells constant. My gaze switched and I was now looking at the window, but something was different. What used to be a beautiful blue sky was nothing, but a thick layer of grey smoke and the sight of New York City below was no longer.

“It uh- appears there has been an incident, can everyone follow me out of the building in an orderly fashion,” Mr Turner spoke out, he sounded calm, but you could hear the fear buried deep underneath his words.

Something was wrong. Anyone sane would realise something was wrong. On my shaking feet, I managed to stumble towards the door following Mr Turner and a group of confused office workers. Once we had made it to the stairs, I'd noticed something abnormal. Smoke had rolled into the staircase, and it was resting right under the ceiling that had blocked its escape. As we descended, the smoke started to become lower and lower until eventually we were completely surrounded by a rampant black gas.

It had become hard to breathe in the tight staircase with little oxygen, especially when anxiety set in as I could no longer find the group of people that I was with originally. Coughs and splutters spilled from my lungs and saliva dribbled down and hung off my chin delicately. Another loud whooshing sound was heard nearby and followed by another explosion, and the thunderous noises sent me tumbling down onto the ash covered floor between two different staircases. That's when realisation washed over me, this was no accident. It was an attack.

Determination raced around deep in my veins, and I got up on quivering legs and headed down one more flight of stairs before entering the first block of offices that I could find. Wobbling like a drunk, I emerged from the fumes and appeared at the nearest window. Everything had cleared

up a little on the other side and I could now see outside, although I wish I couldn't. Right before me was the second tower, and it too was an orangish colour where flames were ablaze on multiple floors at a higher level.

The atmosphere was much cooler towards the window as I could feel the morning air on the glass from the other side. It felt nice but the moment was bittersweet as any moment now I could die from smoke inhalation and here I was enjoying the slightest bit of cold that was pressed firmly against my cheek bone in comparison to the sweltering heat indoors.

Low rumbling echoed through the air and right before my eyes the southern tower started to collapse. Startled, a pained cry left my lips as I thought about all the people that were in that tower, people with families, children, and partners alike myself. Tears rolled down my cheeks like small streams as I fell to my knees and rummaged through my pockets in search of my phone. There was one person I needed to call knowing that I would follow the same fate as the people in the other skyscraper did only seconds ago. A few rings filled the line and then the answer phone started. My husband-to-be didn't pick up his phone. Without a moment's hesitation, I left one quick voicemail with my hoarse and aching voice:

"Dylan baby! Som-something happened, and things aren't looking good here. So, no matter what happens you need to live on for me. I love you."

And just like that, **my heart shattered like glass...**