

A Look Into The Shattered Glass

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It always starts out as a normal day, a simple task, when the memories of devastation hit you. But you will them away and repeat to yourself, “I am safe. I am happy. I am strong.”

Today was an especially normal day. My husband, Roger, woke me up with a kiss on the cheek and grabbed his briefcase. Seconds after hearing the rubber tires grind against the gravel of the driveway, my child, Henry, burst through the creaky door to my bedroom. “Mommy, my tooth!” He wiggled his front tooth back and forth with his tongue. I let the youthful happiness

shining his bright green eyes wrap around me like a blanket. I often find comfort in his child-like innocence.

I pushed his curly, brown hair away from his brow. I gasped before saying, “Henry, your tooth is loose! My little six-year-old is growing up!” He gave me a satisfied grin and started to slide off the blue comforter. I knew this was my cue to get his breakfast ready.

I padded into the kitchen, shivering when my feet slapped against the cold tile. Henry was already at our dining table, bouncing in his chair. Once his cereal was in front of him he started to shovel it into his mouth and milk started to dribble down his chin. “Mind your manners, Henry.” I said, raising my eyebrow. Henry knew an eyebrow raise could mean no playing outside so he nodded his head violently.

I shook my head and started to walk back to my room. I sat down at my white vanity and pinned my hair up. I carefully drew a black line across my lid and painted my lips red. I yanked my closet open and pulled on a plain, blue dress. My mother always told me blue set off my brown hair. The familiar pang in my chest appeared whenever I thought about my mother.

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“Not today, it is a good day” I whispered to myself. Distantly, I heard the door slam close. Henry must have gone out to the yard to kick his ball around. I took deep breaths as I returned to the kitchen to do the dishes. I was lost in thought as I scrubbed my porcelain plates. My mind wandered to trivial thoughts like what I would cook for dinner.

Suddenly, I heard a crash behind me. I was snapped out of my reverie and quickly pulled my hands out of the sink, splashing water on the countertops. I spun around and saw glass

everywhere. I stood there for a moment, puzzled. Henry came barreling in the door already sobbing. He looked to the shards of glass covering the floor to me, crying, "I am so sorry, Mother!" It was as if I was under water.

It sounded like Henry's voice was coming through film. Blood was roaring in my ears as I knelt down on my knees. I picked up a long shard of glass and my surroundings changed. I was back in 1938. It was November 9th, Kristallnacht.

"Abigail, please go help your brother carry those boxes in," my mother said, looking up from her papers. I rolled my eyes with my back turned to her. Josef was nine and perfectly capable of bringing boxes into the candy shop. As soon as I stepped outside, the fresh, crisp autumn air invaded my nostrils. My chocolate brown eyes snapped to Josef, who was trying to balance all of the boxes in his skinny arms. His green eyes held mine silently asking for help. I always envied his eyes. I stomped over and snatched the candy out of his arms.

Suddenly, we heard wailing down the street. Josef started to walk towards the noise saying, "What is happening?" I grabbed his wrist and pulled him back inside.

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When we stumbled through the door, my mother and father looked at us with wide eyes. "Meine kinder." My father said, his voice cracking.

From the front of the store, I heard a crash. Josef, forever curious, ran to the window before my mother could grab him. In those few seconds I had pieced together what was happening. It had to be the Nazis. This time we did not hear the shattering of windows, we heard gun shots. My mother ran to the front of the store and let out a scream that could not be human.

It was too much raw emotion for just one person. I followed my father to the front of the store. Lying before me was my bleeding brother.

My eyes blurred. I could not focus on my father dropping to the floor or my mother wailing over my Josef's body. All I could see was blood. It felt like someone had dropped concrete on my chest. A sob escaped me and I dropped to my knees. It could not be Josef. He was too innocent and pure. The monsters stormed in and went straight towards our cash box. They never spared my brother a glance. Next, the murderers wrestled my parents out of the shop because of their crimes of being a Jew. I could not even protest. I was too numb. I saw the pool of blood slowly crawling towards me. I made my way over to Josef, grabbing his hand.

I traced my fingers over his face. "Josef, you cannot leave me." I croaked. His now dull eyes slowly drifted towards me. "Protect the candy." He said with a tiny smile. His eyes shut. "No!" I screamed. I shook and shook him but he never woke. I felt my soul wither, threatening to snap. My brother was dead.

"Mommy?" I was back in my kitchen. I looked down and saw blood dripping from my palm. I turned to my little boy with green eyes and took a deep breath. "I am safe. I am happy. I am strong"