

Chapter 1 : Smashwords " Broken Pieces: A Short Story " a book by Tracy Higley

Broken Pieces has 14 ratings and 1 review. Hannah said: A short story about a woman who considers committing suicide on Christmas Eve. Absolutely beautiful.

Ohh boy, finally got to this part. Warnings for this chapter: Minor Suicidal themes Chapter Text It was some time before Toriel could fight past the sudden palpable tension in the air and make her mouth form words again. His empty sockets stared blankly down at the bed, and she could only imagine what thoughts and memories were tearing at him to fuel such a hollow expression. The feeling of his grip on her paw tightening was the only sign of movement from him as he finally managed to reply. She stared down at him, mind whirling with confusion and now far more insistent fear. Words with little grasp on reality as she knew it, but clearly oh so real and painful to him. She turned a bit to face him better, reaching to lay her other paw over their clasped hands. "I don't understand. That did seem to be the prompting he needed to actually turn to look at her again. Those dark, empty sockets combined with his detached, vacant smile faintly chilled her, but she did not break from his gaze. As before, meeting her eyes seemed to help ground him and his unnerving expression softened a bit. His voice still carried a distinctly distant quality to it though as he kept talking. There was little time for her to even think as he continued on, and she was reminded of his almost desperate insistence of continuing with his story the previous day. Clearly there was a debilitating fear that dwelled inside him that usually kept these words firmly locked away. He wants to keep talking, she can tell. But reality was starting to creep back in. Parts of it made her magic feel like ice as it flowed through her body, but the shock was tempered by her inability to understand. Now that he was quiet again, she gave his hand another squeeze and willed herself to speak. I know this is difficult but I just cannot grasp what you are trying to say. At her words, he shuddered hard and dropped his gaze from her again. A strained wheeze of empty laughter escaped him and he covered his face with his free hand. His bones rattled quietly as his trembling returned in earnest. He pulled in shallow breaths, all the while clearly fighting against the urge to begin his tirade again. The magic radiating from his soul was becoming heavy with frustration and fear. Instincts kicking in, she moved closer and freed a paw to rest on his shoulder, offering him her close presence but not as to smother his will to speak. Gently, she rubbed the spot in small circles, hoping to help ease his soul into calmness again. I am not going anywhere, I promise. There is no need to rush with this, alright? He clenched his teeth against the frantic words of his great inner burden and did his best to heed her. And the implications? They were nearly too overwhelming to even consider. She focused on comforting her friend, if only to keep her own thoughts from becoming unhinged. But she did come up with an idea for how to go forward with the conversation. Once she felt her friend had sufficiently calmed enough, she ceased her quiet reassurances and spoke more directly. She ran her thumb pad softly over his knuckle bones in a silent show of thanks as she continued speaking. Sans drew in an unsteady breath and nodded weakly behind his hand, squeezing his empty sockets shut. It was the go ahead she needed, but she still took some time to begin. Just the idea of what she was about to ask him to clarify was so inordinately unthinkable it made her head feel numb. But she pressed on, forcing the words out even as her very soul wanted to lock up with fear. Set back to a point and erased of all that had happened before? The skeleton replied with a single shaky nod. It was a miracle she managed not to panic. Toriel felt faint, and as though the tips of her paws had gone ice-cold. Her mind was reeling to a dangerous degree, but still, she kept talking, willing all her strength to be put into that task. His phalanges curled against his skull as if he were trying to tear at it, creating a terrible sound as bone dug into bone. She began to move to try and stop him, but before she could, his self-control shattered like a thin piece of glass. His left eyelight flared to life with a bright flash as he got to his feet and pulled his hand away so quickly and that Toriel distinguished the movement as only a blur. There was no time to prepare before his verbal onslaught returned with a vengeance. But there was no time to comprehend, no time for any of it to click within her mind. Some deep part of her soul, perhaps the part of her who had witnessed the depravity of war and the grisly death of her children, gave her the mental fortitude to grasp some semblance of calm. She stayed silent through the rest of his furious outburst, letting him finally rid himself of the worst of

his tormenting secrets without interruption. The horrible alternating glow of his eyelight seeped through his phalanges like wisps of ethereal flame. He cursed darkly and turned from her, phalanges twitching as the magic flared around them, wanting to funnel his rage and pain into an attack that never came. He just went on with his ranting, giving voice to words that had been burning within him for so long that she may be among the only ones who could truly grasp the amount of time. She kept her silence, watching him, absorbing his words and their utterly devastating, inconceivable implications. Dots were connecting, pieces were falling into place, and it was all building into a fiery roar inside her mind. It nearly deafened everything else as her entire worldview threatened to cave in on itself and bring her down with it. Somehow though, that odd resilience from deep within held strong, allowing her to stay quiet and outwardly calm. It was only when he turned to meet her gaze again and drilled her with that fervid eyelight that he finally broke from his cyclical diatribe. He froze up, some part of him snapping back to awareness at the sound of her voice, but only enough to silence him. His eyelight and the magic around his hands still flared intensely as he glowered at her. She covered her mouth with her paws, vision blurring as tears pricked at her eyes. The skeleton went silent again, though she could still see a smear of dancing colors through the watery veil. Surely if she did that, it would all be over. And one of them just had to stay level in this situation. It took all her strength to face him again properly. His continuing silence cut deep, but she saw then through the blur of tears that his fiery displays of magic were fading. The anger that had been there was gone, burnt out perhaps or banished by the sight of her own quickly mounting realization and despair. Instead, exhaustion had set in once more, leaving him with that horribly familiar look of emptiness and guilt. She would have preferred he go back to being angry, rather than looking as though he had no strength left in his soul. As before, the sight triggered her instincts enough that she broke through the layers of shock that had left her practically frozen. Rushing forward, she caught him before he could fall down completely. She could see as well as feel that there was a terrible warring of emotions behind the expression twisting his now dark sockets. Some part of him wanted to launch into a wave of apologies equally passionate as his ranting before. Neither side could seem to win over enough to push him to keep talking, and only succeeded in bringing tears to his sockets. His lack of an answer to her earlier question did not phase her. Everything she had previously believed about her world, her entire existence, now felt up to question. She struggled not to let this new terrifying reality that was settling in keep her from being there for her friend. All she could do for the moment was hold him close and fight to keep her composure. The air was filled with the sound of his broken, frantic apologies. She could not reply, but she hoped her tight embrace and the feelings flowing from her soul would be enough to soothe him in time. For beyond all the existential terror and rekindled grief that gripped her, he would find no trace of hatred or disgust, only agonized sympathy on his behalf. His pleas sent terrible stabs of pain to her soul, and were enough to drive her to attempt to speak again. With some effort, she managed, but her voice only came out as a hoarse rasp at first. She cleared her throat and found more success with her second attempt. Her mouth had worked this time, but the words she had intended to speak were nothing but lies. There was nothing fine about this situation and they both knew it. What could she say then? What could anyone say? Sans seemed to accept that answer though, relief at hearing her voice again clearly felt from his soul. Still, more tears escaped his attempts at withholding them, silently disappearing into the fabric of her nightgown. The conversation had to continue, lest the shock and horror drag her back into numbness again. Sans gripped at her in response, seeming to sense her weakening grip on her own composure. It was almost comical, the idea of him trying to support her if she did faint. If there was any space in her mind for humor at the moment, perhaps she would have felt faintly amused. The only thing she could do was listen to him and just breathe. In through her nose and out through her mouth. She could handle this. It was beyond anything she could have imagined, and it was surely tearing at her very sanity, but she could handle this.

Chapter 2 : Muscatine County, Moscow Cemetery, Moscow Township List by Surname by Alpha

Tracy Higley has a magical, almost mystical, voice which reverberates between the paranormal and the realistic -- all at the same time. This is surely true for at least "Broken Pieces", the allegory "Rescued" and the novel, "The Awakening".

A beautifully crafted story breathes life into the cameo character from the classic novel A Tale of Two Cities. It is the worst of times! Paris groans with a restlessness that can no longer be contained within its city streets. Hunger and hatred fuel her people. Violence seeps into the ornate halls of Versailles. It is the story that has never been told. In one night, the best and worst of fate collide. An act of reckless passion will throw Laurette into the arms of the increasingly militant Marcel. And Gagnon, steadfast in his faith in God and country, can only watch as those he loves march straight into the heart of the revolution. She hopes his Wisconsin Mennonite community will be a quiet place to grieve and piece together next steps. Sifting through fields of berries and memories of a marriage that was broken long before her husband died, Ruth finds solace in the beauty of the land and healing through hard work and budding friendship. But an unexpected twist threatens to unseat the happy ending Ruth is about to write for herself. On the precipice of a fresh start and a new marriage, Ruth must make an impossible decision: Rosenberg From the New York Times bestselling author of The Kremlin Conspiracy comes this latest international thriller about a terrifying nuclear alliance among three world powers—Russia, Iran, and North Korea—and the man who must halt their deadly strategy. Shot out of the air in enemy territory in the middle of the greatest international crisis since the end of the Cold War, former U. Secret Service agent Marcus Ryker finds himself facing an impossible task. Not only does he have to somehow elude detection and capture by Russian special forces, but he must convince his own government to grant safe harbor to the one man responsible for the global mayhem—Russian double agent and assassin Oleg Kraskin. While frantically negotiating with his contacts in the White House, Marcus learns that the unstable North Korean regime plans to use the international chaos as a smokescreen to sell nuclear weapons to Iran. With the fate of the entire free world on the line, Marcus makes a deal with the U. Marcus and Oleg worked together once before to avert a world war. Can they now find a way to stop world destruction? Sorrells , Chudniv, Ukraine. Playing hide-and-seek in bucolic fields of sunflowers, young Jakob never imagines the horrific secrets he will carry as he and his brother escape through genocide-ridden Eastern Europe. At age 94, time is running out for any hope that Jakob can be free from his burden of guilt.

Chapter 3 : Smashwords â€“ Broken Pieces: A Short Story â€“ a book by Tracy Higley

Broken Pieces: A Short Story by Tracy Higley Natalee restores museum pieces, but she's not sure there's much hope for her own shattered life. Until one Christmas Eve, when she meets a stranger with a broken past of his own.

This hike passes near the old "Gowan Camp" homestead, named for David Gowan. In , seeking solitude, Gowan settled on upper Deer Creek in the Mazatzal Mountains, where he built a log cabin, planted a garden and an orchard, and mined some silver claims. Gowan died in while hiking out of his homestead, and was buried at the intersection of Deer Creek Canyon and Bars Canyon. Hike The Davey Gowan Trail trail 48 begins at a hairpin curve along forest road , where there is a small parking area and a forest service trail marker. Most of this trail is overgrown, and can be difficult to find in places. Route finding skills and the ability to read a topographical map are helpful. The Davey Gowan trail begins by following a forested ridge northeast, until it reaches a small saddle about a half mile in. The trail passes in and out of areas burned by the Willow Fire, and will do so for the rest of the loop. Below the saddle, the trail starts to switchback, and begins a foot drop through the fir trees down the southern slope of Deer Creek canyon. There are some great views along here of a couple unnamed peaks towering feet above the canyon floor. As the Davey Gowan Trail starts to level out, it rounds a corner and passes a small spring. Along here, the trail is a one foot wide, barely visible shelf on a shady hillside. I found it amazing that there would be a dense douglas fir forest growing at feet same elevation as the top of the Flatiron. There is little left to see here: However, the large grassy meadow makes a nice place to rest or camp. Continuing on from the trail junction, the Deer Creek Trail heads up canyon through the charred skeletons of once mighty trees. The trail is a little hard to follow until it starts to climb the hillside along the south side of the creek. There were some small pools of water in the bedrock of the creek bed in this area, as the trail left the worst of the burned area behind. Now the trail began to get steeper, and switchbacks were once again encountered, as the Deer Creek Trail began its final push back to the road. On top, at the Mount Peeley trailhead, I took a short break, then headed east on forest road This last segment, although a road, sees very little traffic and passes through some more nice wooded hillsides. I followed the narrow road for a mile and a half back to my waiting truck, enjoying the great views and cool breeze.

Chapter 4 : Books by Tracy L. Higley (Author of Isle of Shadows)

Tracy L. Higley has 26 books on Goodreads with ratings. Tracy L. Higley's most popular book is Pompeii: City on Fire (Seven Wonders, #6).

Babylon, BC My name is Nebuchadnezzar. Let the nations hear it! I am ruler of Babylon, greatest empire on earth. Here in its capital city, I am like a god. Tonight, as the sun falls to its death in the western desert, I walk along the balconies I have built, overlooking the city I have built, and know there is none like me. I inhale the twilight air and catch the scent of a dozen sacrifices. Across the city, the smoke and flames lift from Etemenanki, the House of the Platform of Heaven and Earth. The priests sacrifice tonight in honor of Tiamat, for tomorrow she will be wed. Though I have questioned the wisdom of a marriage with the captive Judaeans, tomorrow will not be a day for questions. It will be a day of celebration, such as befits a princess. Tiamat comes to me now on the balcony, those dark eyes wide with entreaty. There is our glorious Babylon. Do you not wish to serve her? But I do not wish to marry. Who would have foretold that she would become such a part me? Husband or not, I shall always love you. I release her arms and look into her eyes. Your mother will be searching for you. Tomorrow will be a grand day, for you are the daughter of the greatest king Babylon has ever seen. The greatest king Babylon has ever seen. The words echo like raindrops plunking on stones. I try to ignore a tickling at the back of my thoughts. Something Belteshazzar told me, many months ago. I shake my head, willing my mind to be free of the memory. My longtime Jewish advisor, part of my kingdom since we were both youths, often troubles me with his advice. I keep him close because he has become a friend. I keep him close because he is too often right. But I do not want to think of Belteshazzar. Tonight is for me alone. For my pleasure, as I gaze across all that I have built, all that I have accomplished. This great Babylon, this royal residence with its Gardens to rival those created by the gods. Built by my mighty power. For the glory of my majesty. I grip the balcony wall, inhale the smoky sweetness again, and smile. I hear a voice and think perhaps Belteshazzar has found me after all, for the words sound like something he would say, and yet the voice. The voice is of another. Your kingship has been stripped from you. And yet the voice continues, rumbling in my own chest, echoing in my head. You will eat the herbs of oxen and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is ruler in the kingdom of men. To whom He wills power, He gives power. I roll my shoulders to ease the discomfort, but it grows. It grows to a scratching, a clawing at the inside of my head, until I fear I shall bleed within. The fear swells in me and I am frantic now. I rub my eyes, swat my ears, and still the scratching and scraping goes on, digging away at my memories, at my sense of self, of who I am and what I have done, and I stare at the sky above and the stones below and bend my waist and fall upon the ground where it is better, better to be on the ground, and I want only to find food, food, food. And a two-legged one comes and makes noises with her mouth and clutches at me but I understand none of it and even this knowledge that I do not understand is slipping, slipping from me as the sun slips into the desert. And in the darkness, I am no more. Chapter 1 Seven years later The night her husband died, Tia ran with abandon. The city wall, wide enough for chariots to race upon its baked bricks, absorbed the slap of her bare feet and cooled her skin. She flew past the Ishtar Gate as though chased by demons, knowing the night guard in his stone tower would be watching. Tia ignored his attention. Tonight, this night, she wanted only to run. A lone trickle of sweat chased down her backbone. The desert chill soaked into her bones and somewhere in the vast sands beyond the city walls, a jackal shrieked over its kill. Her exhalation clouded the air and the quiet huffs of her breath kept time with her feet. Breathe, slap, slap, slap. They would be waiting. A tremor disturbed her rhythm. Her tears for Shealtiel were long spent, stolen by the desert air before they fell. Flames surged from the Tower and snagged her attention. Priests and their nightly sacrifices, promising to ensure the health of the city. But the palace was an oasis in a desert. Only to the Marduk Gate and back to the Southern Palace, where her mother would be glaring her displeasure at both her absence and her choice of pastime. Could her mother not wait an hour? Too soon, the Marduk Gate loomed and Tia slowed. The guard leaned over the waist-high crenellation, thrust a torch above his head, and hailed the trespasser. More likely, her reputation ran ahead of her. The night hid her flush of shame. But she could delay no longer. The guilt had solidified, a stone in her

belly she could not ignore. She pivoted, sucked in a deep breath, and shot forward, legs and arms pounding for home. Do I still call it such? When all that was precious had been taken? A widow by twenty-one. And every year a lie. And where was love? The night sky deepened above her head, and a crescent moon hung crooked against the blackness. Sataran and Aya rose in the east, overlapping in false union. As a princess already married for treaty, she was fortunate to retain tutors. Tia chose the east wall of the gate for a focal point and ignored the Gardens. Tonight the palace had already seen death. Chest on fire, almost there. Hands braced against her knees, she sucked in cold air. When she turned back toward the palace, she saw what her mother had done. Tia kept a length of cedar wood there on the roof, a plank narrow enough to discourage most, and braced it across the chasm for her nightly runs. When she returned, she would pull it back to the roof, where anyone who might venture past the guards on the wall would not gain access. Only during her run did this plank bridge the gap, awaiting her return. Amytis had removed it. Her mother thought to teach her a lesson. Punish her for her manifold breaches of etiquette by forcing her to take the long way down, humiliate herself to the sentinel guard. She would not succeed. With a practiced eye, Tia measured the distance from the ledge to the palace roof. She would have the advantage of going from a higher to a lower level. A controlled fall, really. But she made the mistake of looking over, to the street level far below. Her senses spun and she gripped the wall. She scrambled onto the ledge, wide enough to take the stance needed for a long jump, and bent into position, one leg extended behind. The palace rooftop garden held only a small temple in its center, lit with three torches. Nothing to break her fall, or her legs, when she hit. She counted, steadying mind and body.

Chapter 5 : | Travel + Leisure

Natalee restores museum pieces, but she's not sure there's much hope for her own shattered life. Until one Christmas Eve, when she meets a stranger with a broken past of his own.

Chapter 6 : Tracy Higley Book List - FictionDB

Read "Broken Pieces: A Short Story" by Tracy Higley with Rakuten Kobo. Natalee restores museum pieces, but she's not sure there's much hope for her own shattered life.

Chapter 7 : T. L. Higley | LibraryThing

Sigmund Brouwer, Sigmund Brouwer was born in Central Alberta to Dutch immigrant parents. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Commerce from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan and an Honours Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from Carleton University.

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Chapter 9 : T. L. Higley: List of Books by Author T. L. Higley

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