

*Title:* Glass Masks

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*Rating:* G, but it's sad.

*Prompt:* "Something very bad has happened", as a first line to a piece which is no more than 600 words long. (cues challenge, 11-18)

*Notes:* 179 words, 15 minutes, a memory.

Something very bad has happened. Something that pushes her cracks and breaks the fragile glass of her mask. Something very bad.

It starts with a mutual affection for each other. High school crush, college sweethearts. An understanding that they could never be, though not for a lack of trying. But that it starts so sweetly, she could never have known.

They're freshmen again and he says he has to go away. The weight of a country and an empty account on his broad shoulders. She smiles so hard, pretending she isn't affected, that no one realizes the tears are real and there's a tightness in the way she holds herself now.

She runs away, predictably. And though it troubles her to no end that he may die, she's resigned to no longer seeing him. And when she finds that he's come home early, the shock cracks the façade just a bit more. And they're like two ships in the night now, though they love each other still.

It's when she hears he's getting married that the mask breaks apart.