

Shards of Glass

People are like glass. They look pretty strong, but really they're fragile, easy to break.

The hot sun beats down on my neck and back. My battered straw hat makes my head itch, and my dress is far too small, exposing my wrists and lower legs to the burning rays. The burlap sack containing my few possessions slumps beside me on the dusty platform.

Glass can be broken by physical force, by dropping or throwing it, whether by accident or with the intent to harm. Glass can also be broken by invisible pressures, building and building until it finally cracks. It seems a mystery as to why it breaks so suddenly- glass is transparent, but it can hide any amount of stress.

I look down at my ticket. I don't recognise the town name printed on it, but that is indifferent to me. I wipe my brow and pull my socks up even further in a desperate attempt to protect my skin. There is no shade here, or any people. Everything is covered in a layer of brown dust- apparently including the very air I'm breathing. It's as though this platform has been abandoned to the point where even the moisture has forgotten it. But that's okay. I know how it feels.

Like glass, when people are broken, they become spiky and hard to touch. They can accidentally hurt others, and then the others don't want to come back.

I trace an aimless pattern in the dirt with my scuffed sandal toe. The clock on the station sign has stopped, so I don't know how long the train will take to get here. It could be a few minutes, a few hours or even the rest of the day. I sigh. The tracks look rusty, as though the train hasn't been used in a long while, and a few shrivelled plants lie in the gravel, having given up long ago.

Glass takes time to be repaired. You must work out where all the little pieces go before you can even begin. When you go to glue it back together, some of them don't fit because the glue needed is so thick and strong. Tiny shards are lost- tiny pieces of a person's personality. Once you've glued the glass back together, it is easier to break again. Every time you repair it, the shape changes, eventually beyond recognition. It's almost beautiful, in a sad kind of way.

I hear a scraping noise and see a cloud of dust coming over the horizon. The ancient, weathered train stops in front of me, and I walk up to it. On the way, I pick up a broken bottle from the floor. Maybe if I mend it, then somebody, somewhere will be mending too. I step onto the train and watch as the dirty platform disappears behind me. I'm moving on, looking for something to replace my lost shards, and harden the glue between the repairs I've had to make for myself.

Text Title: Shards of Glass

Find the meaning of these words in the text.	Bronze	Silver	Gold
	Fragile, exposing, scuffed	Indifferent, moisture, recognition	Transparent, shrivelled, weathered
 VOCABULARY	Find and copy a word that suggest the train is old.		
 INFER	Find and copy a phrase to suggest that it is a hot day in the story. The character in the story doesn't care where they are going. Use evidence from the text to support this statement.		
 PREDICT	Why do you think the character is at the train station? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.		
 EXPLAIN	What do you think the character means when they say: <i>'Like glass, when people are broken, they become spiky and hard to touch. They can accidentally hurt others, and then the others don't want to come back.'</i>		
 RETRIEVE	Find evidence that shows that the trains do not travel through the station very often.		