

SHELL

by
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'Shell'

The light in her eyes began to fade out. The beating of her heart was the only thing to remind Hannah that she was still alive. Laying against the sharp rubble, paralyzed, any grip of hope Hannah held was slowly slipping from her hold - it was time to give up. She lasted longer than the others. She should be proud. But the slimy, cold chill along her spine told her otherwise.

Hannah Sullivan had come a long way. Being a reporter for the KCBTV News had eased her into a brutal environment, but nothing like this. No one should ever have to live like this. She could still remember it like it was yesterday. Government officials sped down Los Angeles, blocking off every entrance and exit and forcing people into transportation. Hannah had spent the previous night with her boyfriend, Charlie, but her mind was elsewhere. She could never keep her mind off the next big story.

With the news bursting of rumors about a deadly virus hitting the atmosphere, she couldn't help but grow a hunger for the front page story ... and where had that landed her? Hannah was lying in ruins, her veins ripe with infection, gazing up at the night sky realising that it may be the last time she'll see the stars twinkle in her eyes. They closed. Hannah could only hope that someone else's perfect life would flash before her. A life not tainted with the smell of young ambition. An ambition that drove her to an empty town, left in ruins, with the night sky being her only comfort. She was alone.

Her heart, now beating like a hammer, tightened in her chest as the wall that shielded it for so many years began to crumble. A single tear escaped her bloodshot eyes and she let go. The images of her father, caressing her broken, undeveloped body as she roared for release filled her head. The taste of blood, soon followed by the touch of a rough belt, wrapping its strength around her torn skin, cracking with a powerful force. Lastly, the smell. Ambition. Hannah always wanted to make her mother proud.

Clutching her chest, Hannah soon felt the pain ease away. It was in that very moment, as she washed herself clean of the memories that tormented her very soul, that she knew. All that time wasted. It was foolish to close herself off from a welcoming world because of the trust one man shattered. It was foolish to live up to an imaginary image of her mother that she created. It was foolish to give up so easily.

Hannah always use to cringe at the saying '*when life gives you lemons, make lemonade,*' because her whole life, all she's ever received is a deadline. As she lay, violently twitching underneath the heavenly glow of the moonlight, Hannah reached her final one. Hannah sighed her last breath, her soul stretching out its arms and waiting for something from the beyond to take her in. Her body, lay in ruins, driven only by hunger. A shell. Much like Hannah's life ...