



I HAD A HARD TIME SLEEPING. IT WAS AS IF THE FLOOR WAS CONSTANTLY COLLAPSING UNDER ME.



ONE NIGHT A THUNDERSTORM WOKE ME UP. I WAS SURE I'D HEARD AN INCOMING PLANE JUST BEFORE THE THUNDER CRASH AND THAT YET ANOTHER ATTACK WAS UNFOLDING.



TOOK ME AN HOUR TO CALM MY BEATING HEART DOWN AND ANOTHER TO FALL BACK INTO RESTLESS SLEEP.



MY MIND WAS RACING WITH WORRIES ABOUT THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE CHILDREN, ABOUT THE FATE OF OUR HOME AND ESPECIALLY ABOUT A NEW TERRORIST ATTACK..

BUT MY PREDOMINANT EMOTION WAS ANGER. THERE'S A LOT OF WAYS TO TORTURE A TERRORIST TO DEATH, AND I WENT OVER THEM ALL IN MY IMAGINATION.



AS A FATHER, ONE OF YOUR PRIMARY JOBS IS TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN, AND ON SEPTEMBER 11TH, MY ABILITY TO DO JUST THAT WAS RENDERED COMPLETELY IMPOTENT.



I WATCHED THE NEWS COMPULSIVELY.



A WEBSITE SAID THAT THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY OF OUR BUILDING HAD SET UP AN INFORMATION BOOTH AT PIER 40.

I WENT THERE, BUT DIDN'T FIND ANY GATEWAY BOOTH. INSTEAD, I RAN INTO SOME FELLOW RESIDENTS.



WE GOT A NUMBER FOR THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY. THEY'VE SET UP AN OFFICE IN QUEENS.



SO THE CITY'S DECLARED IT STRUCTURALLY SOUND?

OUR BUILDING'S NOT GONNA COLLAPSE?



THAT'S WHAT THEY CLAIM.



WOULD YOU MIND IF WE SHAKE HANDS? I JUST NEED A BIT OF HUMAN CONTACT ON THAT HAPPY NOTE.

NO PROBLEM.



I IMMEDIATELY CALLED EVELYN.

OUR FIRST LUCKY BREAK. COULD BE THAT THE TIDE'S TURNING IN OUR FAVOR.

COULD JUST BE.



PIER 40 WAS ALSO THE SPOT WHERE THEY COLLECTED DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS IN PICKUP TRUCKS TO GO IN AND RETRIEVE PASSPORTS, MEDICATION AND OTHER ABSOLUTE NECESSITIES.



THE OFFICIAL LIST DIDN'T INCLUDE TOY TRAINS, BUT THEY WERE NEVERTHELESS ON THE TOP OF MY ROSTER, COURTESY OF DYLAN AND SPENCE.

THE ACRID SMELL OF THE FIRES STILL BURNING AT GROUND ZERO HUNG PUNGENTLY IN THE AIR.



WE'D BEEN TOLD TO WEAR OLD CLOTHES AND TO BRING A FACE MASK AND A FLASH LIGHT. THIS GUY ACROSS FROM ME WAS IN A SUIT AND SHINY SHOES.





DRIVING INTO MY NEIGHBORHOOD WAS LIKE BEING IN A MOVIE.



GROUND ZERO.

MY BOOKSTORE, MY DRUGSTORE, MY NEWSSTAND, MY BANK, MY SUBWAY STOPS AND THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT LIVES BURIED UNDER THAT UNBELIEVABLE HEAP OF TWISTED METAL.







ALL THE WINDOWS ON THE EAST SIDE OF GATEWAY 600 IMPLoded.



THE NATIONAL GUARD GATHERED EVERYBODY IN FRONT OF OUR BUILDING.



IF YOU LEFT YOUR DOOR LOCKED ON THE 11TH, IT'S BEEN BROKEN DOWN TO CHECK FOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE IN THE SUPPORTING WALLS.

A FIREMAN WILL ESCORT YOU AND UNLOCK THE PADLOCK ON YOUR DOOR.



THERE'S BEEN NO ELECTRICITY FOR TEN DAYS. WHEN YOU GET UP THERE, EMPTY THE REFRIGERATOR.

KEEP YOUR FLASH LIGHTS HANDY AND BE READY.

BEHIND HIS DUSK MASK, I RECOGNIZED THE DOCTOR.



HOW'S IT GOING?  
BEAR-ABLE. AND YOU?



WE'RE SUB-LETTING A PLACE ON 18TH STREET. GUESS WE'RE FINE, EVERYTHING CONSIDERED.



TIME TO GO.

TAKE CARE.  
SEE YOU AROUND.

I'VE LIVED HERE FOR FOUR YEARS AND NEVER PAID ANY ATTENTION TO THE MURAL OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IN THE FOYER BEFORE NOW.

