

Name:

September 11 stories

Ariene Charies

Thirty thousand people were at work in the twin towers that day. Most made it to safety. Here is one story of someone who made it out of the towers.

Arlene Charles ran an elevator in the North Tower of the World Trade Center. She was on the 78th floor of the North Tower when the plane hit. Her story is adapted from Damon DiMarco's book, *Tower Stories*.

Everything was going well at work. Then we heard the explosion: Boooooom! I didn't know what had happened. The strength just left my body and I went down. Flat on my face.

I heard this lady screaming. "Arlene! Please help me! It's Carmen! Can you help me!"

I said, "Carmen, I'm scared. But let's talk to each other. Let's follow each other's voices."

When I opened my eyes, everything was black smoke. You couldn't see anything on the 78th floor. Not nothing at all.

I got a call on my walkie-talkie from downstairs. They said to get out of the building. I said I was trying to find Carmen and I couldn't leave her.

Well the air began to clear a little and I could see that the windows had popped out. Shattered. We were open to the air 78 stories up!

Then someone stumbled into me, screaming and crying. I turned to look and it was Carmen, she was on fire. Her face was all red and her skin was peeled back. It was awful.

Now I was so scared. Then Carmen told me, "Arlene, I don't want to die like this. Let's get out of here, please!"

And I said, "Okay."

We got to the stairs and two guys passed us in the stairwell. One of them gave me his shirt and wet it with water. We put it on Carmen's face and the rest of her. She was still crying out that she was burning. Then some firemen passed us. They opened their hose and wet us down.

Finally, we reached the bottom, having walked down 78 flights of stairs. I couldn't walk any more. One of my co-workers, Alan, asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital. All I wanted was to get home to my family, my kids.

Just as I got to the street, the South Tower started crashing down on us. I had to run for my life. I felt like the whole city was falling apart. I ran inside a building. I didn't see anyone I knew.

I saw this guy and begged him, "Please don't leave me." I was so scared.

"No," he said. "I won't leave you."

I just started walking and walked all the way to Brooklyn. Over the Brooklyn Bridge and across. I didn't have a house key. I didn't have my pocketbook. Everything went in the fire. I had to wait for my kids to come home.

Copyrighted material from Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11 by Damon DiMarco is provided at the courtesy of Santa Monica Press

September 11 stories, continued

Many people made it out of the twin towers because other people helped them. Can you find all the people who helped Arlene along the way? What did each person do?

_____ helped Arlene by _____

_____ helped Arlene by _____

_____ helped Arlene by _____

_____ helped Arlene by _____

Write two cause and effect sentences about Arlene Charles' escape from the North Tower.

Here are some effects to write about. Choose **two** and then find their causes in the story.

You couldn't see anything on the 78th floor.

I had to run for my life.

We were open to the air 78 stories up.

Carmen's face was red and her skin was peeled back.

Use **because** or **since** in front of the cause. Include a comma in between the cause and the effect.

Example: *Because I didn't have my house key, I had to wait for my children to come home.*

1. _____

2. _____
