

Yauri Pressley

## **Life Isn't Always What It Seems.**

Q1 benchmark

My name is Omertà I am a 15-year-old girl I live with my father, Romeo, and my mother Sofia we're a Southern Italian and moved to America when I was about 6, my name represents the southern Italian code of honor and silence. Our family can sometimes be complex and in my opinion, my parents and I don't have much love for each other, we don't do things together that most families do things like back-to-school night excitement or teaching me how to ride a bike or coming to my sports games, etc. I believe there is a reason behind that, growing up my father was abused severely by his father who drank a lot and didn't care too much about him, I believe that emotions tear my father apart and I always applaud him for trying to be the best father but I understand why he is the way he is I just wished he cared about my feelings more and was a little vulnerable to me to at least show me he cares for me. My mother who is a kind of loving parent struggles with identity and knowing how to be there for me and treat how a mother is supposed to treat a daughter and also for things like periods, hormones, and trouble with boyfriends because since birth her mother abandon her and since she didn't have a mother there for her growing up. As I mentioned things were hard for her as a kid because her dad struggled with playing both roles as parents it's hard for a man to raise a daughter when he isn't a woman himself and knowing how to control or keep his daughter calm when these hormones take over her body. "Bring your ass down here Omerta you need to do these dishes they've been sitting here for days I can't believe how unoriented you are I expect you to be nothing but the best and it seems as if you can't even do that". Damn dad Omerta says in her head as she takes in what he just said to her, most days Omerta was lonely just wishing something could take her back to when she was a baby when her parents cared for her more because she was little when they

didn't cuss around her when her father never worked often and would always spend his days with them before her dad got into heavy drinking. I wish my mother was the way she was before I got older and had to experience break ups, periods, and other things I rather not display, I just wish to be a kid again. The day after that I went to school I attended the American School of Milan I would get up at 6 am sharp every morning putting on my bright blue sneakers my black button-up t-shirt, and my cackle uniform pants. I would take the bus to school but every morning before I left out I would grab a sandwich from the refrigerator my dad would make it for me every morning and put a smiley face on the bag. My dad was a great man and a great dad he just had his flaws but I accepted him and I loved him for even trying regardless of the way he acts. As I walked into school everyone stared at me each day, I wasn't sure if it was because of my brunette hair, my violent eyes, or my arms/legs that people exclaimed looked like chopsticks which I found rude because I didn't bother anybody, I was more of the quiet kid who got straight A's went home and barely talked to anyone. Something I struggled with and realized is love, love is something I never really felt like I've had in my life I feel as if no one loves me and I'm just lonely yea my parents can be cool but they don't love me. I feel that if I was to feel the love between me and my parents they wouldn't act the way they do, my dad wouldn't drink and say negative affirmations at times or if my mother tried to be there for me tried to show me she cares for me and tries to show me she is concerned about me but the love is just something I didn't find, even with teachers and friends I didn't have many and the most love I felt was when I was given hugs and smiles by my English teacher Ms.Olay and my math teacher Ms.Carter which I believe are two people I trust mostly they are important to me you know? They care about me more than my parents might they listen to me, they don't judge, and are always supportive and I can almost say I love them. "Ms. Carter, Ms.Olay I was wondering if you guys have time? I just

want to kind of talk about my life and what's been going on I haven't been the most comfortable with my family and I just need people who I can talk to that I trust and who I believe to have some form of love for me. "Yes, I and Ms. Olay are open to talking whenever you want to as of right now if you could lock the door for me, we can discuss it now. "So I believe my parents aren't really or don't know how to be mother and father, they don't understand feelings they don't understand the things they say to me are hurtful my mother doesn't understand that I wished she understood about hormones and me being a teenage girl and what it comes with, my period mood swings issues with boys, etc I just wish they took the time out the day to pay attention to their daughter and pay attention to her and could see that she has problems and they don't even think to help me. "I understand your feelings Omerta I understand why you feel the way you do and what has caused you to feel that way and I truly want to help you no kid should not understand what it means to be loved being a family and being a part of one is important to me and love/trust are two important factors that makeup relationships so no matter what I and Ms.Carter will be there for you. This truly made Omerta feel better about herself knowing that she had others there for her and loved her, but what came with telling teachers your family business was problems, teachers often tell your parents about what you say in hopes they would change but instead it gets the kid in trouble because all parents always say kids are to tell teachers nothing about what's going on at home and to never tell them personal business on family issues/disagreements. When Omerta got home she would have to prepare herself for ultimate anger as she didn't know at first but her teachers told her parents everything as she opened the door to her father with a solemn look as he put the milk away inside the refrigerator and then turns to his right realizing Omerta and automatically began staring at her. "So you just want to be a damn big mouth little girl and tell your teachers everything huh?" her dad

emphasizes as he sips on a 40 from the liquor store.” “Dad just hear me out you and mom are so fucking mean to me okay! I was tired of it I just needed someone to talk to you guys take all of your issues out on me with your offensive words and mom never stands up to you because she hates fighting and arguing with you but I’m tired of it my teachers help me they’re protective of me and they care for me unlike you guys dad and that’s why I told them everything”. “Listen here little lady regardless of how you feel you come to ME AND YOUR MOTHER FIRST! He viciously says as he slams his hand down on the kitchen counter and walks closer to Omerta, he slowly puts his hand around her neck as her mother watches from her side eye she doesn’t do anything she sits and watches as he does it and it makes Omerta get emotional because her dad was a pretty strong guy then he began to abuse her. As Omerta cried and yelled each night she would hope her mother would come to save her from the difficult pain her father put her through constant abuse, she was so used to it school didn’t even feel the same anymore she was scared to talk, and she was scared to take her hood off or wear a sleeveless shirt or take her glasses off in all the pain she was in she just wished her dad would stop. It got to the point where others would always ask what was wrong and regardless of what her dad always said she decided to go back to Ms.Olay and this time she discussed something very important that could change Omerta’s life for good. “ Ms. Olay I’m not sure how you feel about this but I want you and Ms.Carter to adopt me I don’t feel loved in my home and ever since I went to you guys things have been different between me and my dad at first he was bad but now it’s almost like he hates me in my own house and it’s like my mom can’t think for herself and never defends me”. “Say no more Omerta but it needs to happen fast don’t worry I’ll get Ms.Carter on board about this make a plan in the meantime and just try to stay cool in the house I know things will be hard but I have something

to tell you that you need to hear, I love you okay? even though I'm not your biological mother but I will love you unconditionally like I am, get back to class we can chat later".

This heart-warmed Omerta knowing someone loved her hit deep she hadn't heard that since she was 9 years old at the circus with her mom and dad and they saw clowns that she was afraid of she hid away and cried and they reminded her that they loved her and that she was protected that was the last time she felt loved, last time she felt protected by her parents, last time she believed her parent's words, last time her parents didn't let anything happen to their daughter. As school ended and Omerta was on her way home surprisingly her dad wasn't back from wherever he went yet so she went into her room and began packing her bags to get out of the house. "Omerta where are you going? her mother says slowly entering her room in a ghostly tone. "Mom I'm going to tell you the truth I'm leaving I'm moving in with my two teachers who were already on board about adopting me you and dad don't love me and I'm tired of putting up with this mommy I'm sorry I know this will hurt you Omerta says in a slow low tone as she lets some tears out and her mom wipes them away". "I understand totally but listen Omerta before you go I just want to say I'm sorry for all the times I upset you, all the times I watched your dad abuse you, honey, as you know my mom wasn't there for me growing up and I don't totally understand how to be your mother in certain circumstances I don't know how to stand up for myself or you and that makes me a horrible mom Omerta I love you and never stopped loving you I just have awful ways of showing it but I won't tell your dad about this I wish I could have showed you new things , teach you how to be a women but I failed at that and you leaving is totally on me hurry out I will let you know when your teachers are outside". "Mom I will never forget about you you're my birth mother and I know you have your demons and so does dad so I don't blame him for anything or yourself you guys just don't know how to be my parents but it's okay I will

just go somewhere where I feel I am better off at, as Omerta and her mom go in for the biggest and last hug they may get from each other for a while so hard Omerta's lightskin begins to become red and her mom kisses her goodbye. As Omerta leaves the house her mom waves goodbye through the window not knowing if it will be the final time or not she sees her. "Omerta know that you live with me & Ms.Carter things will be different I promise you will not experience the issues at our home that you had to go through at theirs I promise you nothing but unconditional love. After a while of living together with them Omerta finally got to know how it felt to be loved through thick and thin, every obstacle of life, and how it felt to be protected by people you could consider family living with them truly showed Omerta that family doesn't always require blood and blood doesn't make family, trust, loyalty, love, protection are aspects that make family be a family means to be as one be equal help each other, look out for each other support each other, be kind to each other and not use physical force but instead express your feelings and make sure you express your love for your family it's important. I believe Omerta's new family has shaped her identity it has turned it around she's now a more confident less insecure girl knowing she has people who are there for her and know how to treat her, knowing some people are there for her she can call family and can actually say she loves and not just under the condition of her being their kid because they weren't blood and she still felt more protected with them than any other including her parents, Omerta couldn't be happier than she ever was at the moment.

## THE ARTIST'S STATEMENT

- I decided on which perspectives to use for this story by just basically thinking about your average family and about how normally a family of three is just the basic family of living with no issues or etc, but instead I decided to flip the switch in that perspective and create different issues for each character and also different tensions that show perspectives from a good and bad perspective and not only that these perspectives show different angels on family, not often do you hear about teachers adopting students it shows how a family isn't always blood.
- I believe that my story engages the essential questions of a family because we get to see how more comfortable Omerta is with telling her two teachers everything who she has known for less time than her parents because they protect her and care for her my story shows how blood doesn't mean it has to be or is considered family and blood isn't what make family different aspects and your behavior does.

The techniques I used for dramatic irony are basically just adding on different things characters would do during dialouge to basically not bore the scene out and make it a little more dramatic, and descriptive.

- The snapshot that I created was when Ms.Olay expressed to Omerta that she loved her it kind of heartfelt her it made her think about the last time she felt loved by someone or someone even expressed those words to her and I take a deeper diver on protection, for example, I said: "she was 9 years old at the circus with her mom and dad and they saw clowns that she was afraid of she hid away and cried and they reminded her that they loved her and that she was protected that was the last time she felt loved". It shows the deep focus on her opinion of her parents and how they used to feel about her vs now. I chose to use dialouge to express the different feelings of the characters Omerta actually ends up telling her mom about her getting adopted and about how she feels and how Sofia feels for ex" I
- understand totally but listen Omerta before you go I just want to say I'm sorry for all the times I upset you, all the times I watched your dad abuse you, honey, as you know my mom wasn't there for me growing up and I don't totally understand how to be your mother in certain circumstances I don't know how to stand up for myself or you and that makes me a horrible mom Omerta I love you and never stopped loving you ". This shows that Sofia truly loves her daughter unconditionally she just can't show it due to fighting her own demons which causes her to be more closed off but they both understand each other.
- And finally, the motif or repetitive thing I show is the pattern of these school conversations with Omerta, Ms.Olay, and Ms.Carter. I made this choice because their talking at school and telling each other the truth it shows how they all really feel and it allows all three characters to basically express themselves I wanted to show that Omerta feels comfortable around them and can talk to them about anything.