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ESSAY 2

Junot Diaz’s “The Money” is a short story about a lower middle class family who are from the Dominican Republic. They live in a small apartment in New Jersey. The father works really hard, despite the fact that he always loses jobs. The mother doesn’t work but saves as much money as she can. Although they are a big family, and can barely afford to live on what they make, they still send money to their parents back home. But in one summer in particular, while they go on a road trip, they come home to find there home burglarized. Such thigs stolen are a radio, Diaz’s Dungeon & Dragons hard cover, and the money their family was saving. Even though Diaz says that it happened to everyone in their neighborhood, the mother was devastated by this. She cursed at everyone, including her own children, stating that they probably told their friends about the stash. When Diaz tells his friends about the burglary, , he learns through their reactions that they were the ones responsible for it. One day, he goes to one of their houses, and asks to use their bathroom. When they all leave to go to the park, Diaz says he has to go home, goes back to the guy’s apartment and finds his and his family belongings under a mattress. After debating on whether he should keep the money to himself, he decided to return it to his mother, only to receive no form of gratitude whatsoever.

Although there are many stories out there with a similar plot, there are certain qualities that make this one in particular unique. Such qualities are the use of language, it’s style and much more. What makes this short story unique for me personally it’s content. This is due to how relatable it is. Most stories like this involve many complex things, such as a spies, lasers, the bomb squad, a motorcycle chase through the subway, and lowers your brain cell count. But this story keeps it short and sweet, and has parts that you could relate to. Here are some examples of how I relate to this short story.

One way I relate to this story is with the original purpose of the money: sending it to your relatives. When Diaz says ”She chipped dollars off the cash Papi gave for our daily expenses, forced our already broke family to live even broker”,(“The Money”, Diaz), I immediately start to think about my family, especially during the holiday season. Although we live in New York City, which is pretty expensive to live in, my parents always manage to have enough money to send to their siblings. Even when my father was unemployed, my parents kept their promise to the rest of their family and kept sending, and were able to keep living in the same place.

Another way I relate to this story is through the characters, especially the mother. For some reason, the mother reminds of my father (not my mother like you would immediately assume), especially when it is noted “She cursed the neighborhood, she cursed the country, she cursed my father, and of course she cursed us kids, swore that we had run our gums to our idiot friends ad they had done it,”(“The Money”, Diaz). My dad is a cool guy and all, but when ever something goes terribly wrong, this is pretty much the reaction I see. There’s only so much a person who works hard can take, especially when the compensation for the work is taken by someone you don’t know, whether you were robbed or scammed.

One more way I could relate to this is through the reaction of the burglary. When Diaz said “When you’re a recent immigrant, it is easy to feel targeted. Like it wasn’t just a couple of assholes who had it in for you but the whole neighborhood- hell, maybe the whole country”,(“The Money”, Diaz), I think of the anecdotes my father has shared with me, based on his experiences while live in this city for the last three decades. For example, my dad used to work in southside Queens when he first came here. He was left in charge one night to lock up, and while leaving he was followed by a group of thugs. He started to run, and they chased after him. Luckily,, my father managed to run near a precinct. Although he wasn’t robbed or harmed, he’s always shared the experience with anger, as if he was the groups main target.

All in all, the main thing that makes Diaz’s “The Money” unique is its content. This can mainly be attributed to how relatable it is to my personal life. One way it was relatable was the moneys original purpose. Another way it was relatable was because of the mothers characteristics that can be compared to my father. One more way is the burglary itself, and how it compares to older experiences. That is what makes “The Money” unique.

Bibliography

Diaz, Junot. “The Money.” The New Yorker, 13 June 2011, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/06/13/the-money.