

## POETIC JUSTICE BY Chioma S.

I always dreamt of being a poet when I grow up. It's always nice to express yourself in a view of poetry. How do I express myself? Well... I'll tell you in my point of view.

"Maya!" my mother called impatiently. "Will you hurry up? We must be on time!"

"Sorry mama!" I sighed glumly. I didn't feel like going to my Grandparent's house. I wanted to stay in my room and write in my journal. I slipped on my pink bonnet and my worn out "Buster Browns". Jumping from my position, I scurried down the hall now wanting to upset my mother further.

I grasped her milky brown hand in a firm grasp as she shut the door behind her as we strolled down the steps in Brooklyn, New York.

"Mama?" I started, catching the attention of the black female. "Why don't we have a car?"

"Because," Mama said, gripping my hand tighter I swore it could cause a bruise. "We don't have any money."

"It ain't fair!" I whined like a silly child I was.

"It *isn't* fair!" my mother corrected me. "Learn your English."

I huffed as I let go of her hand. "I know you *is* lying mama." For some reason, she didn't correct me, but kept her eyes on the walk.

I glanced at her warily before shrugging and whistling "Straighten Up and Fly Right". It was Papa's favorite song.... until he passed away. The memory brought tears to my eyes, but my daddy never told me to cry when there's a sad part in my heart 'cause Jesus would heal it.

I smiled softly as felt a warm embrace surrounding my body. "Daddy..." I murmured softly. "Let God be in your hands."

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We arrived at an old cabin five miles out of town and our house was ten. So in total, if I think I'm doing the math correctly, we traveled fifteen miles on foot. Mother knocked on the door and soon came out a big woman who had about fifty rolls of fat, sixteen curlers in her gray hair, and had on a towel that hung limp on her body.

I sighed in annoyance when I was smushed into her chest as she shook me about.

"Oh! Hello my granddaughter dearest! How are you my little Esther?"

I grimaced when she said my full name. I always preferred to have my name referred as Ella.

"I'm fine ...grandma." I muttered as she placed me down.

“Well how you doin’ girl?” she immediately asked as soon as Mother and I entered the house.

“Fine Ma.” Mother replied.

The two females entered the kitchen immediately talking about “equal rights”. I had no clue what that was supposed to mean until I was eaves dropping on Mother’s important phone call.

I never felt guilty about what I did.

Untying my bonnet, I picked up an olive that my grandma had out a bowl with other fruits in it, and munched on it happily.

My eyes picked up a piece of paper and my brain clicked. I lashed out my hand for it and saw an ink pen next to it. My heart fluttered in joy as I made my hand dance across the paper making words form across each blank.

**Thud!**

**Smack!**

“I’ll say in one more time Dina!” my grandma’s voice erupted throughout the whole house. “We have to know our place in the world! Booker T said so himself!”

“No Mama!” Mother bellowed. “We must fight like Dubois said!”

They continued to argue while I peeked through the door hoping they wouldn't go physical. My mom stomped out of the kitchen in a huff, grabbing the hem of my sleeve pulling me out of the house.

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It's been two years since I had a day with a lot of rest. I usually eat take-out and I'm the only one in our house. My mother is what she calls herself a “freedom fighter” while I'm a maid, who by the way is fifteen, who works at Mrs. Barbara's mansion. I'm what those whites call us “The Help”. They really need help, but Mrs. Barbara is a nice white lady, so I'm happy with that.

I place a dish on the counter finishing up my chores.

“Ella!” Mrs. B sang.

“Yes ma'am?” I asked, wiping my hands on my apron.

“Good news! I have a new addition to our family!”

“That's amazing ma'am.” I smile that's not all that genuine. “I'll cook you some good chicken poppers for the good news.”

I think she notices my fake glee and gets serious. “Esther what’s the matter?” She steps up to me and looks at the cut above my eyebrow. “Is your mama hitting you again?!”

I nodded solemnly as she sighs in frustration. “She says it’s my fault papa died. I was just minding my own business until she swung her switch at me.” Tears leaked out of my eyes, but I managed to keep them from flowing. “I’m too afraid to go ma’am. That’s why I work extra hours!” I was full blown sobbing now.

She patted my head and coaxed me to stop. I did as she rubbed my back soothingly. She then told me to stay at her house until time being.

I took a glimpse of my journal that I kept my poetry in. With a determined glare, I wrote a poem telling about my experiences with segregation. How hard I work and what I do. I put all my knowledge into this piece, hopefully others will agree too.

It was dark by now as I sat on the plush couch I was staying on until further notice. I put on my night cap and slid under the covers. Closing my eyes, the fan hit my face which was bliss for me. But, I never knew someone took my journal from the table.

Mrs. Barbara stared oddly at the dusty worn out book in front of her. It was a strange thing that curiosity set her to the max. As she opened it, she peered at the writing, and it awed her how passionate Ella wrote.

Mrs. Barbara felt a little bad that she liked segregation. With a sigh, Mrs. Barbara knew exactly what she had to do. She would call her publisher.

It was morning and I woke with a soft yawn. Immediately, I looked to my left and saw that my poetry wasn't near me. I panicked. "Oh man!" I yelled burying my hands in my face. "If 'em white folks got to it, I could die!"

"Oh Ella!" an oh-so familiar voice chimed.

My face paled. Sweat dropped faster than you could say "Dead-man walking". Mrs. Barbara sashayed into the room having one hand behind her back. "Hey I found your book." She smiled handing it to me. "It was pretty inspiring."

I nodded never taking my eyes off of the woman standing in front of me. "Thank you miss." I said. "I know you're scared Ella." She smiled. "But it'll be alright. I sent the book to my publisher... and she liked it."

My eyes widen as my body engulfs Mrs. Barbara into a bone-crushing hug. My tears flow down as I squeeze her more, only for her to return my hug. I smile and chant "thank you" over and over again. She pats my head and tells me to sit straight.

My poetry novel soon spreads to all bookstores all over New York. After tries after tries, I finally forgive my mother, but I have no interest coming back to my old house. It has been six years and thanks to my book, one of the major helps in Segregation. I have a son named Marcus and a daughter named Amelia.

My life has been revolving around my poetry while my poetry revolves around me. I smile softly as I kiss both my children on the forehead. My husband enters the room and hugs me from behind. With a sigh, we walk to our bedroom turning off the lights.