

Junot diaz: characterization



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the short story, “ Fiesta”, Junot Diaz characterizes the main character, Yunior, as a child we should feel sorry for. Much sorrow is felt for Yunior due to him going hungry, his uncontrolled vomiting, and him sacrificing his social life just to keep his family together. He withholds his father’s deepest, darkest secret from his mother, but his father still treats him as if he was not his son. Readers sympathize with Yunior because of the many tribulations his father puts him through.

Yunior keeps his father’s secret because he knows it could potentially tear his family apart and he is scared of his father. In the opening paragraph of the story Yunior informs us that his father is either abusive or has the capability of being abusive. Yunior relays this information by saying, “ If Papi had walked in and caught us lounging around, he would have kicked our asses something serious” (150 Diaz). If Yunior’s punishment for lounging around the house was this brutal, imagine the severity if he ruined his parents’ marriages.

When growing up, kids are taught that lying is wrong. Yunior’s situation is opposite; he must lie or otherwise be punished severely. Yunior is an innocent child in a catch twenty-two situation. He can either tell the truth with the guilt of tearing his family apart or keep his father’s secret while seeing his mother upset. Readers feel a sense of remorse towards Yunior because of the sickness that is brought upon him by his father’s van. Any car ride, after a meal, Yunior vomits in the van.

Yunior’s family believes that the smell of the upholstery is the trigger to his vomiting, but Yunior knows the real cause is the story behind the van. His father only bought the van to impress his mistress. Yunior says, “ I’d never

had trouble with cars before, and that van was like my curse” (Diaz 151). Yuniór’s father scolds him every time he vomits in the van. Even though Yuniór knows the reasoning of his vomiting, he must accept the punishments placed upon him by his father without an argument.

Yuniór allows hardships to be placed upon himself in order to keep his family together. Exposing his father’s secret would ideally get rid of the van and cure Yuniór’s sickness. In order to keep the peace and keep his family together Yuniór accepts his sickness and places more strain on himself than what is necessary for a child. In addition to the previous paragraphs, readers feel sympathetic towards Yuniór because his father does not allow him to eat while they’re away from home. Yuniór states, “ I was never supposed to eat before car rides” (Diaz 151).

This is another avoidable problem that Yuniór must face to keep his family together. Even at parties Yuniór is not allowed to eat. Drinking, eating, and socializing are actions that take place at parties. Although not essential, these things are common keys to having a good time. While the other kids eat and mingle with one another, Yuniór is stuck by himself because he is not allowed to eat. Being isolated from the other kids and punished because he wants his family to remain together is rather upsetting.

Throughout this short story, Yuniór faces many obstacles that could easily be avoided by exposing his father’s secret. Being a child is the supposed to be the best and most relaxing time of a person’s life. They have virtually nothing to worry about. In Yuniór’s case, he has to hold his family together while putting himself at risk. No child should ever be forced to pick the side of a certain parent, especially when doing so not only leads to the downfall

of the parents, but also harmful effects of the child both physically and emotionally.