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ENGL 1191

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My mother tells me to leave early. Whether it is a nail appointment or a flight it didn't matter.

Fifteen minutes early was on time in her book. Being late was a flaw, signaled to others that you were irresponsible. A classy young lady isn't late, only a 'hotmess' would be late. Although, to me being early was just a waste of time. I arrived right on time. I made it work, but for her, she would tweak her anxiety.

She tells me to pick out my outfits the night before. Lay them out folded on the floor. Lunch should be packed on the kitchen counter ready to go. I always said "yeah I'm doing it". In reality, I was faking it. Quickly putting an outfit together once I woke up, throwing in a bag of chips for lunch with one foot out the door. She always says study days before your test, a little bit each night. I'm more of a procrastinator.

She says don't talk to strangers, they can be dangerous. Not everyone needs to know your life story. Personally, I like sharing my life. I'm proud of my accomplishments and I am curious about other people's endeavors. I question why she stays reserved. How else would I learn who people are, but she says that I don't need to know that. She always said that my curiosity could get me into trouble. I respond with "silence is what makes you lonely".

She tells me to sit still, enough with the fidgeting. My non-stop moving body draws attention to myself. I can't help but fidget. Different from my mom, I suffer from mental health disorders including anxiety and ADD. Tasks that she finds simple, I can't complete without taking breaks or having a fidget toy with me.

She always plans ahead, is prepared for everything, and lives her life ten steps ahead. Living like that focuses on the destination and not the journey. I tend to figure it out when I get there. I play it by ear. She tells me this is not just living in the moment but improvising. I clap back and say that improvising is a skill, and she says only if you know what's coming ahead first.

She questions why I trust so easily as I open up my arms big to welcome in new people. She claims that trust should be earned but to me, it should be offered. She says that I need to proceed with caution, but why should I think the worst of people?

She says arrive early, sit still, and observe quietly. I don't agree with that. I arrive just on time, I don't like waiting around. I live life to the fullest, despite having to step out of my comfort zone. She always slows me down, her motto being "life is not a race". But, I don't stop, I keep going, because life isn't a waiting room either.

She tells me not to overshare, often telling me to "shut up". Don't cry in public is what I've been taught. More than often, I find it easiest to cry outside on a park bench. Her pushing down her emotions has made me push mine out. Going to therapy for five years, despite her not being able to open up to her closest family and friends. Her fear of emotion has forced me to break my own stigma.

She says you don't need to fill every silent room, but I hate silence. I don't need to impress everyone around me, but I like to connect with others. We discuss our differences, and acknowledge that's why we argue. She gets angry, I look at the brighter side. I have anxiety, she doesn't. Our emotions look different, but we embrace one another. She says the world is dangerous, and I say it's also beautiful, and she says beauty doesn't protect you, but neither does fear.

She slows down, I speed up. She listens, and I talk. Somewhere in the middle of all our differences, we come together. We sit at the same dining room table, we share blood, and at the end of the day, are best friends.

It's not said outloud, but these differences are stark, in silence we understand.