

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS / STORY ATMOSPHERE

The Family lives in suburban America. Father is a middle-aged white male. Mother is a middle-aged white female. Daughter is a 7-year-old white female. Brother is a 9-year-old white male. Ro-bear is a small, slightly tattered teddy bear. Omela, who is not related to the Family, is an 8-year-old black female. Drawn like a 1950s sitcom, except for Omela, who is drawn in a hyper-realistic style. Pays homage to The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas, by Ursula Guin.

Song I created to capture the emotional tone of the story:

<https://soundcloud.com/omnivata/the-system-is-corrupt>

PAGE 1 | 4 PANELS

PANEL 1

DAUGHTER snuggles into bed. FATHER covers her with a blanket. RO-BEAR, a stuffed animal, lays on the bed nearby.

1. FATHER: Another perfect day.
2. DAUGHTER: It was!

PANEL 2

Father is sitting on the bed near Daughter. Daughter is reaching for Ro-bear.

3. FATHER: What did you like best?
4. DAUGHTER: Ask Ro-bear first.

PANEL 3

Daughter holds Ro-bear - outstretched by his arms - in front of Father.

5. FATHER: Okay. Ro-bear, what was your favorite part?
6. DAUGHTER: The giraffe!

PANEL 4

Father is now holding Ro-bear in one hand. He gently presses the stuffed animal's nose against Daughter's forehead while she giggles.

7. FATHER: Now Ro-bear wants to know what made you happy today.
8. DAUGHTER: Daddy, I'm **always** happy.

PAGE 2 | 6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Father sits at the head of a dining table. Daughter and Ro-Bear sit to one side. BROTHER is sitting on the other side. MOTHER is serving Father pancakes. The big breakfast she has just cooked - which includes scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, hash-browns, and biscuits - is spread out in serving dishes on the table. Mom is wearing an apron.

1. CAPTION: The next morning...
2. FATHER: This looks delicious.
3. BROTHER: Yum!

PANEL 2

Close-up of Ro-bear sitting in his chair, head below the table.

4. DAUGHTER: Ro-bear would like some too.

PANEL 3

Mom adds a pancake to Ro-bear's plate.

5. DAUGHTER: He says thank you!

PANEL 4

Brother has a mouthful of food, with another spoonful ready to go.

6. BROTHER: After breakfast, can I play a game?
7. MOTHER: Of course, dear.

PANEL 5

Daughter is holding a spoon in front of Ro-bear's mouth, pretending he is eating. Father is taking another bite of food.

8. DAUGHTER: Dad, I'd like to visit her today.
9. FATHER: Who, Sunshine?

PANEL 6

Mom frowns.

9. DAUGHTER (off panel): **Omela.**

PAGE 3 | 5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Father looks inquisitive.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 2

Daughter holds Ro-bear up so Father can see the stuffed animal.

2. FATHER: Why today?
3. DAUGHTER: Because Ro-bear asked if we could.
4. FATHER: Oh, he did, did he.

PANEL 3

Father leans in close to Daughter, with a serious expression on his face.

4. FATHER: Are you **sure** you're up for it?
5. DAUGHTER: I'm sure.

PANEL 4

Father wags his pointer finger towards Mother, silently directing her to remain quiet.

6. FATHER: After breakfast, then. Bug, want to join us?
7. BROTHER: Nuh-uh. I want to play my game.

PANEL 5

Father winks at Daughter.

8. FATHER: Looks like it's just you, me, and Ro-bear then.

PAGE 4 | 5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Father opens the door to the basement. The steps recede into the darkness.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 2

The light has been turned on. Daughter is close behind Father as they descend into the pit of despair.

1. FATHER: Watch your step.

PANEL 3

Daughter and Father now stand in a large, unfinished basement with dirt floors, where they can see another door to a much smaller room.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 4

Father unlocks the door to the smaller room with a skeleton key.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 5

With the door to the closet open, we see OMELA, fearful and huddled in the corner. She is extremely malnourished. Her skin is covered in dirt and feces. Her hair is unkempt, and her clothes are tattered. In the opposite corner of the small closet, there is a broom that has been tipped over. The broom leans against the wall, as the room is too small for it to fall all the way to the floor.

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE 5 | 7 PANELS

PANEL 1

Daughter waves kindly to Omela.

1. DAUGHTER: Hi, Omela. How are you today?

PANEL 2

Father holds his arm out in front of Daughter to keep her from getting too close.

2. FATHER: She can't speak, Sunshine.

3. DAUGHTER: Why not, Daddy??

4. FATHER: Omela has a disability.

5. DAUGHTER: Can she join us, today?

PANEL 3

Daughter looks up at Father with a tear welling in her eye.

5. FATHER: No. She **must** stay here.

PANEL 4

Father has his arms in the air, one finger pointing towards the ceiling, the other towards the floor, as he explains how the happiness above depends on the sorrow below.

7. FATHER: She is **the source** of all our happiness.

8. FATHER: There's one like her in every home.

9. FATHER: Every industrialized home, that is.

PANEL 5

Father has just finished setting the broom back upright in the corner, while Omela crouches and covers her head with her hands to protect herself.

10. FATHER: Omela's suffering - while tragic - ensures the rest of us will always be happy.

11. DAUGHTER: That's so sad.

PANEL 6

Daughter hands Omela her favorite stuffed animal, Ro-bear. Omela accepts the stuffed animal with a cautious but curious expression, grabbing the bear by its foot, the portion that is furthest away from Daughter and Father.

11. DAUGHTER: **Here...** Ro-bear will keep you company.

PANEL 7

With the closet door closed, Daughter and Father walk away, holding hands. Daughter is smiling.

12. DAUGHTER: Let's go **play**, Daddy!

END
