

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

Me Llamó Lenika

Karina Yarwood Smith
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, Montreal
February, 2008

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
M.A. Culture and Values in Education

© Karina Yarwood Smith 2008



Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-51405-4

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-51405-4

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Abstract

Educating language minority children in Canada is becoming increasingly challenging as our population becomes more and more diverse. Determining the best educational policy to help immigrant children learn English or French, while furthering their knowledge of core subject material has long been a difficult task for educators in the public system. This novel is a fictional account of an immigrant girl's first year in an Ontario elementary school. Through her experience, I describe a language policy whereby children have access to bilingual primary education no matter what their first language is. Two-way immersion is offered for language minority groups with significant numbers of students within a district. And, in collaboration with the community, first language support in school is given to students of all language backgrounds. I propose a teacher training programme that better prepares teachers for the linguistic diversity in their classrooms and promotes foreign language learning in teachers themselves. Children under this system are able to acquire the dominant language of society, learn the subject material, and continue to develop literacy skills in their first language. With such policies in place, I argue, Canada could be a world leader in bilingual education for diverse populations.

Résumé

L'enseignement aux enfants issues de minorité linguistique au Canada pose un défi de plus en plus important à mesure que la population s'y diversifie. Déterminer la meilleur politique pédagogique pour aider les enfants d'immigrants à apprendre le français ou l'anglais, en plus des autres matières importantes, à toujours été une tâche difficile pour les enseignants du système public. Cette nouvelle est un essai fictionnel qui traite de la première année passée par une jeune fille dans une école élémentaire de l'Ontario. Par son expérience, je décrie une politique linguistique dans laquelle les enfants ont accès à une éducation primaire bilingue peu importe leur langue première. L'immersion bilingue est offerte pour les minorités linguistique significatives de chaque région. De plus, en collaboration avec la communauté, du support bilingue est accordé aux étudiants de toutes origines linguistiques. Je propose aux professeurs un programme de formation qui les prépare à la diversité linguistique de leurs classes et je promouvois l'apprentissage de langues étrangères par les professeurs eux-mêmes. Les enfants dans ce système sont capables d'acquérir la langue dominante de la société, d'apprendre les cours, et de continuer à développer les aptitudes littéraires dans leurs propres langues. Avec cette politique en place, j'affirme que le Canada pourrait être le leader mondial dans l'éducation bilingue pour ses diverses populations.

Table of Contents

Introduction	i – xi
<i>Me Llamo Lenika</i>	1 – 182
Appendix	183 – 194
List of References	195 - 204

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, it is a response to a call for further research in the field of language policy, particularly in multicultural settings like Canadian elementary schools. Macedo, Dendrinos, and Gounari (2003) say that there are far too few publications in the field of language education “proposing that school curricula be restructured so that they may address the needs of the groups traditionally excluded from the dominant discourse of schooling”(p.54). There is a gap in the literature on second language education with regards to multicultural and multilingual classrooms. This is a very specific challenge for Canada as we are a country built on immigration and our student populations continue to grow in diversity. Thus, questions arise that need to be addressed if we want to maximize our potential as a world leader and model for education. For example, *how* should we organize our education system in order to accommodate children who come from all over the world, creating a very linguistically diverse classroom setting? *How* do we teach language minority children English, Canada’s dominant language¹, while at the same time furthering their cognitive development in areas of core subject matter such as science and math?

A key assumption that I make from the beginning is that maintaining a child’s first language (L1) *while* acquiring a new one (L2) is a desirable outcome. For many children in multicultural societies, there is more than one language spoken in the home and therefore when they arrive in school the language to which they are exposed may be their third or fourth. All of these languages should be allowed to be developed and not sacrificed in the name of learning the dominant language. Consequently, the central question guiding my research becomes *how* should we organize our system in order to educate a linguistically diverse student body in the English language and the curriculum content material, while further developing their first language so as to become highly competent bilinguals in a multicultural nation and globalized world? This thesis describes a language policy for Ontario elementary schools that I believe could successfully educate the province’s linguistically diverse population using the students’ first languages as resources for learning, and aids for acquiring English.

¹ I have focused on an Ontario classroom scenario, and thus the language of greater society is English. I recognize, however, that in the province of Quebec, the dominant language is French. As my arguments regarding language acquisition apply in general, no matter what the L1 or the L2 are, it should be noted that from here on I will refer to Canada’s dominant language as English, while implying that the same be considered for the Quebec system only with French as the L2.

Second, this thesis adds to the growing collection of qualitative research presented in non-traditional formats. With this work I enter into the discussion on how and why to use alternative methods, such as fiction, to connect research and representation. I have chosen to do a theoretical thesis, examining the current literature in the fields of language policy, language acquisition, bilingual education, and critical applied linguistics, with the goal of devising a potential education system that could apply in a Canadian setting. However, my arguments are presented to the reader in the form of a novel. The story is a fictional account of a 10-year-old girl who immigrates to Ontario with her family from a non-English speaking country. It shows her experience in her first year in Canada as she moves from a traditional English-medium elementary school to a school that supports and encourages multilingualism and dual-language instruction.

I chose this alternative method of presenting the research so that it is accessible to everyone, rather than only those in the field of education or those in academia. This was an extremely difficult task to accomplish, for once I left the familiar language and vocabulary of traditional academic writing, I was in the position of needing to 'translate' the theories and studies I read into a coherent narrative telling a story of a little girl's experience at school. I was at once challenging the barriers of tradition and at the same time undertaking a scrupulous hermeneutic analysis of the literature. I was not simply compiling what I had learned from my theoretical research, but I was taking the knowledge from the relevant fields, applying it to a multicultural setting, and then representing it in a way that expressed my conclusions creatively and allowed the reader to experience them through the eyes of the protagonist herself. Facing these challenges required a rigour beyond what might have been expected inside the traditional format.

Research Focus

Cooper (as cited in Paciotto, 2004) defines language policy and planning as "the deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes"(p.532). In an English-dominant society in particular, Ramirez (2002) believes it is a "question of how to best educate students with limited or no English language skills..." and an issue of "whether these children should receive instruction in their primary language..." (p.178). Research shows (Crawford, 2000a; Cummins, 2001; Ramirez, 2002; Corson, 1995) that without an adequate language policy in place in the education system in Ontario, children whose primary language is one other than English will not achieve as high grades as in an environment that values the use of their first language.

Importantly, without a language policy that supports and includes minority languages, discrimination will continue to exist within the school system. Ghosh and Abdi (2004) explain that

“Discrimination is the behaviour resulting from prejudice, which grants or denies individuals or groups opportunities and rewards based upon characteristics such as ethnicity, sex, class, religion, and language”(p.67). Without a language inclusive policy, as laid out in this thesis, knowledge of the dominant language and culture in Canada will continue to be legitimized as the only valid type of knowledge.

Canada is one of only a handful of countries around the world where the population is significantly made up of immigrants from other countries (Statistics Canada, 2007). This unique situation puts us in a precarious position, as the potential for both failure and success in providing for such a population is great. Over the past ten years, the United States has taken a few steps in what many call the wrong direction in education (Macedo et al., 2003). The elimination of dual-language policies in linguistically diverse states like California, in place of English-only policies, and policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 that saw the reinforcement of culturally bias standardized tests and facilitated military recruitment, demonstrate Canada’s potential to fall short of meeting the needs of our children. At the same time, great work is being done in the field of education that could push Canada into a position of world role model for multicultural education and critical language pedagogy. The current thesis is important because it contributes to the work attempting to reveal this country’s strength and ability to lead the way in bilingual education serving a diverse population.

Many countries, in fact *most* countries, have various linguistic groups living together in a given community or broader society (Bryson, 2001). And indeed, many have devised some way to allow children who speak different languages to study bilingually if not entirely in their first language while they are simultaneously acquiring the dominant language. For example, India has over 1600 mother tongues with 21 national languages plus 2 official languages. They follow a ‘three language formula’ whereby the regional language is the medium for instruction at the primary level, with the federal union official language (Hindi) and English added to the curriculum in mid-primary years (Tollefson, 2002). In Ghana, children study in the dominant local language for the first three years of primary school, with English studied as a core subject. Then in primary four, these languages switch positions (Wilmot, 2002). In the early 1990s, Mexico implemented ‘Bilingual Bicultural Education Programs’ which aim to maintain indigenous languages and identities for their diverse school populations. The programme uses the native language of the children as the exclusive medium of instruction for the first year of primary school. Spanish is introduced in the second grade and becomes the language of instruction by the third grade (Paciotto, 2004).

These policies are only a few examples, and they are not without criticism. But Canada (along with Australia, the United States, Israel, and other countries with high immigration rates) remains unique in the sense that many *individual classrooms* within individual schools, especially in big cities like Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, house a range of minority language speakers so wide that any of the policies in place in other parts of the world would not be adequate in a Canadian classroom. For example, Thornwood Public School in Mississauga reported in 2001 more than 40 different languages spoken by members of the school community (Schechter & Cummins, 2003). The language policy that serves Canadian schools such as Thornwood must be one that is flexible, adaptable, and able to fluctuate easily and evolve as our population changes.

Along with the linguistic diversity of a given Canadian school comes ethnocultural diversity. Unlike some countries that have a range of languages spoken by native-born citizens, Canada has a range of languages spoken by Canadian-born citizens *and* non-Canadian-born citizens. That is to say, many children in our schools come from a different country and culture and not only have a different language but also a different perspective and understanding of the world based on sometimes extremely different life experiences than anything known to children who have grown up in Canada. The Toronto District School Board, for instance, serves communities where over 50% of the student population was born outside of Canada, and over 90% speak languages other than English at home (*School Profiles*). This thesis is an attempt to describe a language inclusive policy in education that could function in such a complex society.

What is presented in the following pages is neither a formula nor a prescription. It is an *idea*. Because I chose to set my story in a fictional Ontario city, and therefore in a setting where English is the dominant language of society, this is only one example of the way the system could be worked out. Languages are personal and complicated and there is no one-way to organize an education system anywhere that would necessarily work successfully anywhere else. Language policy is context-specific, and in Canada this makes our task all the more intricate because the cultural context of every school is unique. Many small regional Quebec schools, for example, serve *only* white, European descendent children, while schools in many Toronto districts serve large majorities of foreign born children. The principles I present in this work can be modified, adapted, and improved upon according to the specific city, board, or school needs. I have not dealt with every possible scenario. Educators and administrators would be expected to extrapolate and personalize a policy suitable for their schools.

What's more, if we are to implement a policy that aims to educate non-discriminatorily, the way that Canadian teachers are trained must change too. Teachers must understand the needs of their students better, many of which will come from backgrounds different from their own, and have

previous educational experiences quite unlike the ones our teachers are providing. Much research has been done on teacher training (Schechter & Cummins, 2003; Kincheloe, 2005a&b; Edwards, 1998; Eggington & Wren, 1997; Ovando & McLaren, 2000), as many feel that pre-service teachers in multicultural settings are not being prepared adequately for the cultural and linguistic diversity that they will face in the classroom. Are they, for example, being taught about the nature of language and how languages are learned “so they can create appropriate learning environments for second language learners”?(Lessow-Hurley, 2005, p.21). Are they being taught to build an understanding of the cultures and social backgrounds from which their students come, and of the values and beliefs that motivate the ways their students act in and out of the classroom? Do they understand the historical and political contexts of bilingual education and are they thus prepared to assess students’ needs, and plan appropriate activities to meet those goals in more than one language? Questions such as these guided my research on teacher education for this thesis.

As the world continues to shrink and peoples blend, Canada’s educational strategy for a multicultural setting will be sought after around the world. Were we to develop a language policy for education that produces a highly qualified and highly proficient multilingual population, it would serve as a model for other countries that are becoming more and more diverse. While Canada’s education system is indeed held in prestige around the world already, its potential is enormous as populations diversify and policies to accommodate such populations become more in demand.

The immigrant population in Canada is growing. Statistics Canada indicates that in 1991, 16.1% of the Canadian population was foreign-born. In 1996, 17.4%. In 2001, 18.4%. Moreover, the Canadian population grew 5.4% between 2001 and 2006. This acceleration was two-thirds due to an increase in international migration (Statistics Canada, 2006). As we work towards a global culture and community we have to be prepared for an influx of language minority students in our schools. With a growing number of immigrants to Canada every year, the need for a language policy that supports minority students’ native languages in early education is growing as well.

In Canada, research focus has been on official or Native language minorities (Burnaby, 1998; Dubach et al., 2002; Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Wiley & Wright, 2004), and the struggle these groups of people have faced ever since Europeans arrived on the continent. Programmes such as French immersion and Cree and Mohawk immersion in certain parts of Canada have been the focus of numerous studies. However, as Corson and Lemay (1996) point out, “there is much more research to be done in finding ways to value and maintain minority children’s first languages and to report successful policies and practices”(p.95). I take their statement as a starting point for this thesis. The minority children to which these authors are referring, and the ones in which I am particularly

interested, are immigrant children to Canada and the children of immigrant parents whose first language is not a Native or an official language of Canada.

De Mejia (2002) questions monolingual classroom practices in bilingual contexts:

Another recommendation that would seem to be appropriate...is what may be seen as a 'common sense' approach to classroom language use based on monolingual criteria but used in potentially bilingual situations, i.e. when students have different first languages, should be re-examined in the light of what is known about bilingual and multilingual programmes...In this way, traditional 'English medium' schools might consider the advantages of providing institutional support for their students' first languages, as well as their foreign or second languages. (p.300)

It is clear that children who do not speak one of the country's official languages need efficient ESL/FLS training. That is, English as a Second Language and Francais Langue Seconde programmes that offer more than just one hour a week of memorizing English or French verbs. These programmes need to operate in a way that does not bore the children nor force them to work under drill and grill methods. Immigrants who come to Canada often fall under the category offered by Ogbu (2001) as 'voluntary minorities'. That is, "people who have moved more or less voluntarily to the United States or any other society because they desire more economic well-being, better overall opportunities, and/or greater political freedom"(p585). These minorities usually expect to have to adjust to the language difference and they want their children to learn English. There is no denying that learning English is a necessity to function in the general Canadian society. At the same time, however, the goal should not merely be to make everyone an English speaker as quickly and cheaply as possible, because too often this leads to a system of subtractive bilingualism instead of additive bilingualism. In other words, not enough attention is given to maintaining our citizens' first languages while adding the new one, but rather just to replacing the L1 with English. Any policy that aims for a monolingual and homogenous society is taking a step backwards (Cummins, 2001).

The other school of thought, and my research is guided by these ideas, is that language can be used as a resource in a school classroom, as well as in society at large, and linguistic diversity is not to be viewed as a threat, but rather as social strength to encourage and support. It is widely accepted that we are on the path towards a global culture; one where people of all backgrounds are respected in every part of the world. English-only policies (where English is the only language allowed for instruction) perpetuate discrimination against language minorities because they reinforce the dominant language as the 'right' language and in comparison, every other one is inferior (Genesee & Gandara, 1999).

Supporters of these types of policies often view the growing multicultural and multilingual state of the nation as problematic. Something has gone wrong, they believe, and the situation needs to be cured (Tse, 2001; Ramirez, 2003).

Finally, I believe that addressing the question of how to educate language minority children in a way that allows them to fully develop their linguistic potential as bi and multilinguals is important because of the strong attachment human beings have to their mother tongue language. Mark Abley (2003) tells a story of a young Mohawk boy whose mother says to him, “if you lose your language, you have no business saying you’re a Mohawk”(p.182). These powerful words demonstrate the connection that people often feel between their language and their identity. The feeling that one is being robbed of their very selfhood is shared by people who have had their language stripped from them, such as the Mohawk people in Canada, and Native peoples all over the world, as well as many immigrants to countries that do not support the maintenance of their language.

This is a theme that recurs often in the tales immigrants tell of their experiences beginning a new life in a foreign country. Eva Hoffman (1990) writes in *Lost in Translation*, “...linguistic dispossession is a sufficient motive for violence, for it is close to the dispossession of one’s self”(p.124). Indeed, it can be argued that denying a person the right to study her native language is denying her the ability to construct a meaningful identity. My thesis attempts to highlight this connection and bring the political aspect of language education to the forefront of discussion.

Method

There are two main reasons why I chose to present my research findings in the form of a novel. The first is in response to a call for more research within the qualitative domain that can reach diverse audiences and express empirical findings in an accessible way. The second is because of the creative freedom of writing outside of the traditional format, and my desire to address what has been termed the ‘crisis of representation’.

It was extremely important to me when I set out to write my thesis that at the end of it I would have a product that was widely accessible. I chose not to write a traditional essay style paper because I was concerned that if I did, only a narrow group of people would read it. I hoped my audience would be broader than researchers and scholars in the field of education and linguistics. I was very aware that my thesis mainly concerned language minority children and their families. I therefore wanted to write in a language and style that would be enjoyable for children, families, and the general public both inside and outside the university setting. Traditional format theses call for an academic jargon² that I

² Robert Fisk (2007) gives an excellent and comic description of what jargon has become in our media, political, and personal language. He writes “There is something repulsive about this vocabulary, an aggressive language of superiority in

did not believe was appropriate for my audience, nor for the qualitative domain within which I wished to present my ideas.

Gergen and Gergen (2000) say “the qualitative field has become a major source of creative innovation in modes of representation. Experiments in reflexivity, literary form, and multiple voicing, for example, have injected new vitality into the research endeavor. Yet, there is good reason to press further in such pursuits.”(p.10). My thesis contributes to such experiments in representation and attempts to reduce the alienation of researched from researcher, while bridging academia and the rest of society. I believe that social change will come about with the combined efforts at the local level with the power that public opinion has on policy makers (a ‘bottom-up’ approach), and at the higher education level, in academic settings, by and for those who have strong influential power (a ‘top-down’ approach). As Wren (1997) puts it, “Good government policy...may be shaped by lobbyists, the media and the groundswell of public opinion but may also be initiated...by the researchers and the senior decision-makers”(p.25). By choosing to write in narrative, avoiding academic jargon, and yet presenting arguments solidly based on research in the field of language policy and L2 education, I have connected the two arenas.

Furthermore, Rist (2000) writes “it is fair to note that there is seldom enough research-based information available in the policy arena...A redefinition is needed of the context in which to look for a linkage between knowledge and action”(p.1003). Indeed, the risk that a policy is a poor one is increased when it is based on little or no research. For example, language policy created based on the assumption that the best way for language minority children to acquire the dominant language is by throwing them into a sink-or-swim environment that shows no support for their first language, will be a poor one. Or, if the same policy were created based only on the narrow-scoped studies that show better results for schooling entirely in L2 *in the short term*, while ignoring the research that shows the long range benefits to using L1, it would be a poor one (Thomas & Collier, 1997, p.7).

Throughout my thesis, I emphasize my belief that it cannot be entirely up to politicians to decide what is best for Canada’s school children. The school children themselves and their parents, along with teachers and the community should be involved in the decisions that affect the system under which our students study. And these decisions need to be informed by rigorous and reliable research. Language policy is a sensitive issue in education because if implemented for harmful reasons, such as domination and control over a group of people, it can act as a dangerous tool for the oppression of

which ‘key players’ can ‘interact’ with each other, can ‘impact’ society...They think ‘outside the box’ or ‘push the envelope’” (p.1) and this, he concludes, chokes our language because we are utilizing words for effect instead of using them for meaning.

minorities. Macedo et al., (2003) note that “many analyses of language planning and language policy in education have failed to make a critical examination of the political strategies adopted by those involved in these social practices”(p.53). I hope that by creating an academic work that is readable and comprehensible by anyone from any area of expertise, I disseminate critical information about language policy and language acquisition that will spur social awareness and change. The more we are conscious of the myths that circulate regarding government motivations and actions, the more we are able to make informed decisions and demand what we believe is best for our children.

My thesis is also valuable in the context outlined by Rist above because it attempts to demonstrate what an education system with language policy based on long-term research could look like in practice. It contributes to the link that Rist calls for because it is a description of an education system in practice, which allows readers to see the connection between theoretical ideas of policy in education and what they could look like in action. Parents, teachers, and students themselves will be able to visualize the policy I propose, take applicable parts from it, and pressure their local school board, while administrators, board members, politicians and policy makers will be able to draw on the scenario I have created when reforming actual language policies for schools.

Many researchers have discussed a certain crisis in representation when it comes to presenting research data and knowledge in the realm of qualitative research, the world of lived experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) identify a profound rupture in the mid-eighties when researchers began seeking new models of truth, method, and representation (p.16). The old way of thinking, where the only rigorous research was research that posed as objective representation of the real world, is now discredited. *All* research is ideological, subjective, and political because it is human beings who carry it out. A human being is always a product of his or her life circumstances and experiences, there is no neutral way of viewing the world, and “the backgrounds and expectations of the observer shape perception”(Kincheloe, 2005, p.9).

Furthermore, there are always values represented in our writing. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) say that a good researcher is “too conversant with the crisis of representation and the existence of language games to buy into claims of language as a neutral mechanism for reflecting a reality”(p.43). Language has the power to create a particular view of reality, and is used to mould and shape readers’ perspectives in whichever way serves its interest. Thus, if the very foundations of knowledge, the vehicles through which we share information, are themselves open to interpretation and contextualization, then researchers have a crisis of representation. The question on any researcher’s mind should be *what* constitutes an adequate depiction of social reality? As Richardson (1990) says,

"All language has grammatical, narrative, and rhetorical structures that construct the subjects and objects of our research, bestow meaning, and create value"(p.12).

Writing a novel gave me the freedom to write creatively and *show* what I could only otherwise *discuss*. However, with that also came a heightened level of comprehension of the field of language policy and second language acquisition, as I was bringing it to life rather than simply describing it. I chose to represent my research in a language and format that are familiar to many people. If academic research information continues to circulate primarily among those in the ivory towers of higher education, then grassroots movements will take much longer to manifest themselves, and social change will continue to be an excruciatingly slow process. Alternative methods of representation can act as bridges between the elitist world of academia and the world where we all live and interact every day as citizens of one world. I hope my thesis can be enjoyed by those who consider themselves part of either or both of these worlds.

Laurel Richardson (1990) asks what strategies we as researchers can use to write lives so that our writing matters. Many authors have responded to this question and suggested techniques such as testimonios (Beverly, 2000), experimental ethnographic texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), and fiction, poetry, or autobiographical invention (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). Their responses are directly related to the crisis of representation, as they are concerned with using multiple forms of representation in order to reach diverse audiences.

As mentioned above, up until about thirty years ago it was believed that all rigorous research was politically neutral and free of influence from the researcher's own values. Writing within this tradition was supposed to be 'academic' and 'objective'. Today, it is widely agreed upon that all research is ideologically guided. Gergen and Gergen (2000) describe how forms of writing that replace traditional realist, 'truth-telling' discourse are becoming what many researchers are interested in employing to disseminate their findings. For example, the investigator's descriptions may be in the form of fiction, poetry, or autobiographical invention, indicating to the reader that the material presented is not attempting to map the world, but is an interpretation (p.4). My current work is directly in line with this observation, and I chose the novel form because of the greater expressive and creative range it allowed me.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) write that "Because language is always slippery, with its meanings ever 'in process', critical hermeneutics understands that interpretations will never be linguistically unproblematic, will never be direct representations"(p.289). The process I undertook to write this thesis involved examining various researchers' findings and interpreting them, converting them into the life of a fictional character. I had to imagine what it would look like if the research

findings were applied in an actual school setting. Of course, many of my sources themselves were manuals that accomplished much the same goal. They were 'bilingual education in practice' books. But I took the interpretation one step further and attempted to *show* the findings through the experience of a language minority child herself. Furthermore, accounts of actual immigrations to North America served as a basis for some of my research. Thus, I was interpreting the emotions, hardships, challenges, and frustrations of others and attempting to insert my interpretations of their experiences into the characters I created.

Because of this hermeneutic aspect to my thesis, I do not claim to be representing the immigration experience nor the minority experience of any group or individual in particular. My characters are meant to symbolize what has been found in academic studies and personal accounts of the immigration and minority experience. Minority students are not a homogenous group and the story I put forth is dramatically different from what many students might feel.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to spur discussion among educators, policy makers, parents, students, and the community at large around issues in language policy in education. I hope it will clarify the need for more research in the area of pedagogy within a multilingual and multicultural society. The way in which Canadian students are educated affects all of us because our schools prepare children to become contributing citizens in our country. If we want our population to be intelligent, compassionate, and pro-active, our schools need to be designed to build on the skills and knowledge with which each child enters the classroom. Linguistic abilities are intimately related to success in other areas, and therefore I argue that a school's language policy needs to be the centre of discussion. I urge my readers to investigate further into the topics, often controversial, explored in this thesis, because change can only come about when we demand it. Most of all I hope that this book provides an insight into what a language policy that values the maintenance of all our children's first languages might look like. With such a policy in place in our provinces and territories, Canada could better prosper from the wealth of knowledge and talent that our language minorities bring with them to this country.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been prepared under the supervision and with the editorial help of Dr. Joe Kincheloe.

PART ONE

Chapter One

Angel rubbed his eyes and wiggled his way up so that he was just high enough to see out the taxi's window. He had slept for most of the bus ride from Toronto and had drifted off for a few minutes as soon as they had entered the taxi. But the excitement was too much, and now as he looked out the window, his mother, sitting beside him in the middle of the car, smoothed his hair. "Coucou mi chiquito," she said, and leaned over to kiss his head.

On her other side, her daughter's head moved back and forth as Lenika tried to keep up with everything going by outside. Carlos, Maria's husband, was doing his best to converse with the driver. He had managed to get across that they were indeed new to Canada, and that they were now on their way to Ambury, a city outside of London, Ontario where they had arranged to rent a house. The driver inquired about their luggage and Carlos stuttered his best rendition of the complicated history their luggage had endured since they left their home country about a month ago. The story would have come out muddled in Spanish, his first language, and, from the look on the driver's face, Carlos could see that the English version had been far worse than muddled.

"It arrive soon," he stated with a mouth twisted in frustration.

The driver chuckled. "I've been through it all."

The Costa family had been staying with Carlos' older brother, Luis, in Toronto since they got to Canada at the beginning of July, and, when their luggage eventually arrived from home, it was just in time to get shipped to their address-to-be in Ambury, hopefully coinciding with the family's own arrival this very day. Their bus had left Toronto in the early morning, and the children were still wearing their pyjama tops.

Luis had a daughter named Elisa who was much older than Lenika. The girls had spent time together during Lenika's month in Toronto, and Elisa was proud to be a role model for her younger cousin. Elisa had immigrated to Canada in 2019, when she was very young, and she had virtually no recollection of her home country. Only feelings, really, and images. Carlos and Luis had both taken to their father's trade as carpenter, and the three of them had worked together for the same construction company. When Luis and his family made the decision to leave for Canada, it was decided simultaneously that Carlos would follow shortly after, as the need for skilled workers was strong at that time. Their oldest brother, Jose, was 34 when Luis left for Canada, and he was studying medicine at

the local college. He felt no desire to leave their home and his parents and a life in which he was comfortable. In fact, Jose couldn't understand why his brothers wanted so badly to leave. The idea of abandoning everything he had worked for at home and venturing off to start with nothing in a new country did not appeal to him. Jose lived in the here and now, in the comfort of the country he had known his whole life, with his wife Alina, and he was perfectly content.

Carlos' plan, however, did not manifest itself as precisely as he and Luis had imagined. About a year after Luis left, Carlos fell in love with a young teacher. They married and made up their minds to stay where they were for the time being and raise a family. Maria had established a small preschool in her home, and had built a solid rapport with a dozen or so families in the neighbourhood. On top of this commitment, her mother was quite ill. Maria was not prepared to leave a professional position she had worked hard to achieve and a mother that needed her care. Especially once Lenika was born, the Costas' roots grew even firmer in their native soil.

The Costas struggled in their first years of marriage, for the demand for construction work was wavering. Maria's maternity leave pay was only granted for 12 weeks and although it was 100% of her salary, it was still not enough to support their growing family beyond more than a year or so. And with her mother living in their home, Maria found herself spread thinly over two care-giving jobs. Eventually she and Carlos decided she needed to go back to work. They badly wanted a second child, but their finances were unstable, and so they waited, hoping things would turn around. That fall Lenika would be school aged, and so Maria put her mother in a home where she was cared for full-time, and thus freed up her days to reopen the school.

This arrangement lasted for a couple of years, and combined with good fortune, the Costas' financial situation improved during this time. Their spirits were up as well. With both parents working, they were able to better provide for their daughter. Emigrating was always in the back of Carlos' mind, and they were finally able to put some money away in savings. When Lenika was entering her second year of school, the Costas began preparing themselves for another child. Angel arrived one bright and sunny December morning, only a few days before Christmas. Again Maria closed the preschool, and again the family struggled.

That year was a difficult one for the entire nation, with the economy in rough shape and a government not trying to do anything to fix it. The gap between rich and poor was widening and Maria and Carlos saw it clearly and felt it painfully. The company Carlos worked for was talking about closing down, and for months Carlos rose and dressed for work in the morning fully knowing there would be no work for him to do, or at least no work that anyone was able to pay him to do. To make matters worse, that winter was tougher than anything they had known. Temperatures were constantly

dropping below zero, and for weeks and weeks it appeared as if the wind and freezing rain were here to stay. The family could not afford heating during the day, and at night they slept all together in the small room by the heater, when they could turn it on enough so that they would not freeze.

Maria's mother did not make it through that winter. Her illness took a turn for the worse shortly after Angel was born, and she was never able to fully recover. By March, all the family's Canada savings had been spent on necessities to get them through the winter, and prospects of emigrating were once again grim. One morning a brown envelope arrived in the mail from Canada. It was from Luis, and inside was a cheque. The brief letter that accompanied it was as follows:

Hermano querido,

Come as soon as you can. Toronto is a city full of opportunity for both you and Maria. There are openings in my company all across the province, and my friend and boss says he can arrange work for you. This prospect, along with the money enclosed, will help with immigration. Your children will learn English here and be able to make a better life for themselves. Tell father the next cheque is for him.

Love from us all,

Luis

The Costas rejoiced over the money, and sent in return a package of Luis' favourite local delicacies. And so it was that they began to devise a plan, once again, to leave for Canada. First, it was decided, Carlos would enrol in an English course at the city's college, as his English proficiency was next to none. They knew there was no hope of immigration without English or French language skills. He had learned the little English he did know through American movies and occasionally a practice conversation with Luis' wife, Carmen. Luis himself had also taken a course in the months before his family's emigration, but he had had the great fortune of a wife who had studied English since she was a child (she was something like the family's fortune in the literal sense, as well, the daughter of a modestly well-to-do merchant). It was then arranged that Carlos' cousin, Maria, would keep Angel during the day while his mother went back to working with the children in her preschool. Maria, the cousin, lived on her family's farm outside the city, and this plan provided the growing baby boy with fresh air and good milk to drink. As before, the family's spirits lifted as their financial slump lessened. Maria adored her job, and she dreamed of being able to teach in a school in Canada. In fact, this dream soon took over her daytime thoughts as well, and it became a game she played with Lenika.

Every afternoon as she met her daughter and walked home from school with her, they would pretend they were walking home from school in Canada. One day Maria would play the teacher, and the next day it would be Lenika. The two of them imagined to each other every last detail of what their new country was going to look like.

Lenika Costa had grown into a beautiful little girl with eyes just like her mother's, dark and inquisitive. Her thick brown hair curled at the ends and no matter how much Carlos told her she was pretty with it hanging down over her shoulders, Lenika tied it up into a ponytail on top of her head. She had the curiosity of a kitten and the drive to accomplish whatever she set out to do. When her mother brought her home a skipping rope, she took it into the front ally and practised until she could skip all the way down the road to the corner store. Whenever her best friend Ana came over with a jigsaw puzzle to put together, Lenika would clear off the little desk in the corner by the stove and make sure they had a plate of cookies laid out to enjoy as they worked. She was good-natured, kind, and almost always cheery. Although she did not have the same depth of understanding about her family's hardships, she was sensitive, helpful and gracious. To her brother, she was an idol. He would look up at her when she walked in the room and fix his eyes on her. He would not flinch nor break his gaze no matter what Maria would do to get his attention. He admired Lenika like no other.

At school the teachers often told Maria and Carlos that when they were having a long day they thought of Lenika and her sweet little dimples, and it made them smile. Lenika could make anyone smile because not only did she love to laugh, but her laugh rang like a wind chime, bright, loud, and crystal clear. It was a music that the whole neighbourhood came to recognize.

At school the teachers said other good things about Lenika too. She was quite clever, for example, and this combined with her sense of adventure made her a class leader. The other children looked up to her and she floated among her classmates like a dove. She had a silly side, they never failed to mention at parent-teacher interviews, especially when with Ana, but she was easily settled when they spoke to her in earnest. Lenika was able to find a reason to enjoy any project her teachers set ahead of her, and she gave a solid effort to nearly everything.

The circle of friends and the little established life that had blossomed around their daughter made the decision to leave for Canada hard on Maria and Carlos. For although Maria talked about it often with Lenika, she knew that the difficulties that would come with the move were not real in Lenika's innocent, seven-year-old's mind. What she would be leaving behind was not a consideration when Lenika day-dreamed about Canada. Canada was a fantasyland, a mystical, imaginary place where Lenika would go in her mind's eye before drifting off to sleep at night. Nevertheless, Maria and Carlos proceeded with their preparations, and intended to depart at the end of the coming summer.

The emigration was not as smooth a process as they had thought. The documentation took far longer to process than they had hoped, and everything had a fee attached. In the end they could see it would still be long before they had the financial means to meet the Canadian immigration requirements. Maria and Lenika's day dream eventually eroded to an occasional bed-time story, and then to nothing. Years passed, and the talk of emigrating again dwindled to only the rare mention of "when we are in Canada" or "in Canada it will be different."

Now, Lenika was 10, Angel, 4. In the back of the taxi cab, Maria looked from her son to her daughter as their tired faces swallowed up the passing landscape. Their new lives were about to pan out ahead of them in a town that they had only heard Luis and Carlos talk snippets about over dinner. Why Ambury? For the one and only reason of job opportunity. Ambury was a young city, perhaps more accurately described as an expansion of London. Houses, condos, and apartment buildings needed to be built. Carlos would find work. In fact his brother, Luis, had spoken with a connection in the Toronto based unit of his construction company, and thus it was arranged for Carlos.

When the taxi finally pulled up in front of the modest house they were to call home, the children spilled out the car door and up the front steps to the porch. As they were investigating, a short, plump woman in a frilly blouse emerged from the screen door. She introduced herself in Spanish. Lucía, from the Centro de Cultura. Carlos checked the little piece of paper he had in his pocket with the woman's name who would give them the keys. *Lucía Perez – Ambury Culture Centre Housing Services - lun 3 de agosto – 149 Mulberry street – citarnos para discutir precios.* They shook hands and she led them inside, helping Maria with her bag. Lucía nattered on about the house's little quirks. The top left burner on the stove didn't work, lighting in the basement was being installed and someone should be in this week to clear up the mess, there was no fence out back, only ivy climbing along a wire. Maria and Carlos listened politely and then when Lucía had left, the entire family laid down on the beds in the upstairs bedrooms and fell asleep.

Chapter Two

"I'd like to thank you both for meeting with me and I'd like to welcome you to Ambury. Have you been settling in well?" Mrs. Kelly, a superintendent for the Ambury elementary schools, shook Maria and Carlos' hands. She was a tall Kenyan woman about thirty years older than Maria. Luis had advised his brother to speak with someone about schools as soon as they arrived. Even though it was

still a few weeks before Lenika started school, they wanted to explore their options and find a school that suited their daughter's needs.

Carlos searched through his small English repertoire for an appropriate answer to the question. "Yes well, tank you." They sat down in the chairs allotted them, and Mrs. Kelly introduced the translator who would be helping out during their meeting. Mrs. Kelly seemed abashed as she admitted she only spoke beginner Spanish.

The office was large, and it appeared to double as a small conference room, equipped with a television, a DVD, a pull-down screen on the back wall, an 8-person round table with leather office chairs, and an espresso machine. Mrs. Kelly's actual desk was on the other side of the room by a very wide window overlooking the park behind the Ambury Public Library. It was an L-shaped desk that housed the most elaborate telephone Maria had ever seen, amongst a half dozen picture frames. On the opposite end of the desk, for it was large enough, after all, to have an opposite end, was a flat-screen computer and a soapstone carving of an Inuit mother holding an infant.

Once the Costas were settled, Mrs. Kelly proceeded to describe the schools available for their children. Angel, Carlos did his best to explain, would not be going to school until next year. But there were apparently three options for Lenika.

Mrs. Kelly elaborated, as slowly and clearly as she could, pausing after every idea to allow Berta time to translate. "There are two public schools in your district, and so Lenika will not have to travel far to get to either one. *And*, luckily, the LIP school that offers Spanish two-way immersion is in your district." The woman was looking at them excitedly, waiting for an equally excited reaction. The Costas furrowed their brow in confusion. Mrs. Kelly said that they were welcome to investigate the schools that were outside their district if they liked, as there was an excellent bussing system in place to ensure all children could access the school the family chose. There were no restrictions or penalties for attending a school in a different district.

To clarify, she handed them two brochures, one of which, Maria was pleased to notice, was printed bilingually. "Now, the first school, Honey Elementary, is an English-medium public school, K to 5." She caught herself, realizing she couldn't assume they were familiar with these cultural terms. "I mean, Kindergarten to grade 5. Children begin Junior Kindergarten at age three, Senior Kindergarten at age four. This means your son Angel will enter school next year in grade 1. Now, Honey Elementary is one of the only remaining English-only schools in Ontario. All of the instruction is given in English, no matter what language the children are most comfortable in, and no matter what level their English ability. There are English as a Second Language classes every week for an hour and a half. However, these English-medium schools are being phased out, in favour of the Language

Inclusive Programme schools, which enable children to study bilingually.” She seemed somewhat relieved to say this last part.

“Honey Elementary is pictured here in the first brochure, which is just an outline of what you can expect from the Ontario elementary school system. The other school is part of our network of schools that follow the Language Inclusive Programme policy, as I mentioned, also known as LIP, that was implemented in Ambury only a few years ago. The LIP is based on models from many countries, but adapted to serve Canada’s extremely diverse student population. Other Canadian cities have had enormous success with the programme, and the statistics they are predicting for the Canadian population in terms of bilingualism in the coming decades are encouraging.

“The second brochure, as you can see, gives an outline of Tove Elementary. Tove is one of Ambury’s three LIP schools, also K to 5. It operates because of the demand for Spanish and Italian language education in the East end of Ambury. Woodthorn Elementary is another LIP school offering Portuguese, Mandarin and Cantonese, and Edwards Public School offers Hindi and Arabic.

“Students attend these schools from many of the nearby townships, and some come from as far as London for the Cantonese programme. We are working to expand our LIP network but at the moment there is not enough demand for some of our other minority language groups. For instance, Ambury currently has a Tamil-speaking community of about 3,000 or so. However, when we looked at the break-down of school-age children, we found that it would not be practical to implement the programme for the Tamil language this year because there was only one grade where there were more than 10 to 12 students. Most schools in the London Wentworth District School Board like to have a minimum of 10 to 12 students in *every* grade in order to open a branch for the particular language. We have found it is most economical and practical this way, however we do a thorough evaluation every year to make sure these numbers are still appropriate for the coming year. There have been many exceptions when certain language communities happen to have a large amount of children born in the same year. We then bring in a teacher who follows the class through the years. In the case of Tamil, I can easily foresee it becoming a LIP language in a couple of years time, as there are many young families with children who will begin school shortly.

“So, the way it works in the LIP schools is that the school day is split between the child’s first language and English. In other words, children from those seven minority language groups are taught bilingually through what we call *two-way immersion*. This method has been shown repeatedly in studies conducted all over the world to be one of the most effective ways for language minority children not only to learn English better but also to learn the subject material better too. It is called

two-way immersion because there are also children from the Anglophone community in these classes who are acquiring a second language.”

Carlos asked, “So in Lenika’s class there would be native Spanish speakers and native English speakers?”

“That’s right. It is a mix. There are also English-medium classes for every grade, usually filled with Anglophones and children from language groups other than those seven I mentioned. In the English-medium classes, the language minority children spend two hours a day with language support staff who come to the school to work with the students in their first languages. Which means that under the LIP policy, every child has the opportunity to study in his or her first language for part of the day, and thereby further his or her development of this language while at the same time learning a new language.”

Maria listened to what Berta said Mrs. Kelly said. It was oddly against what seemed natural to her. It made more sense to her that studying in a first language would *slow down* the acquisition of a second language. She was going to try and ask this, but she was shy. She decided she would bring it up with Carlos at home. Her priority was to have Lenika learn English now, not Spanish.

After a few more minutes of question and answer, the Costas stood up, shook Mrs. Kelly’s hand again and thanked her. Then they chatted with Berta in Spanish for a minute, and headed home.

“Oh, I forgot to mention,” the superintendent called after them. “On the back of the LIP brochure, there are some excellent recommendations for readings on the subject of two-way immersion! I hope you will look further into it before making your decision.”

The Costas smiled. It was clear that Mrs. Kelly thought the Language Inclusive Programme was their best option. It just seemed so counterintuitive to send their daughter to a school that would have her spend part of the day in Spanish when she was here to learn English.

As they walked home, Maria and Carlos discussed their options, but Maria was pretty certain she wanted Honey Elementary. She looked at her husband with raised eyebrows. He knew that look, he knew it meant she had made up her mind. There had only been one time in the history of their relationship when Carlos had overruled the raised eyebrows, and that was when they had taken Milo. Milo was their mutt back home. The Costas had taken him from Carlos’ brother, Jose, who could no longer care for him. Carlos knew that his brother would kill Milo if they did not take him. Besides, it was two against one. Lenika, although only five at the time, expressed an earnest opinion that they ought to take the dog, and she even promised to throw the stick for him in the road whenever he wanted. This heartfelt promise had won Maria over, and they picked up Milo the next morning.

This particular Monday afternoon, however, Carlos could see Maria felt strongly about sending Lenika to a regular English language public school. "Mira, Carlos," she began, although she had already gone through her arguments once. He smiled because he knew by the way she puffed her lips out in between sentences that she was quite sure she was quite right. The way she spoke when she thought she was right was, to Carlos, the most beautiful Spanish in the world. No one else manipulated the words in the way Maria did under intense debate. She was able to find just the right expression, the right idiom, for every idea.

"But what if Jacqueline Kelly was right and Lenika should be further developing her Spanish at the same time as learning English?" Carlos pushed.

"Don't you think she will still learn Spanish from us, here at home? And she speaks Spanish with Angel. I think it is more important that she start grade 5 with the rest of the Anglophone children in Ambury. I will read more about what the superintendent suggested, but for now, seeing as we have to register her next week, I think we had better go with our original plan. Exclusively English."

There was a pause, and then Carlos told her he agreed, Lenika should go to an all-English school. That is, after all, what they wanted for her in Canada. They wanted her to integrate and make Canadian friends and gain confidence and self-assurance in English. An English school was clearly best for her.

The next day Maria took Lenika and Angel to the Culture Centre to see what, exactly, went on there. The Culture Centre was located about fifteen minutes away on the number 17 bus, which went straight down Mulberry Street and then turned onto Wellington. They got off right in front of the big red brick house that was the Culture Centre. It was a wealthy land-owner's home from the 1920s, they learned, and almost fully intact with original carpeting and wallpaper. It had two floors plus a basement, and was attached to a new sports complex with gyms and a pool. The office was on their left as soon as they walked in through the heavy, wooden front doors.

A young woman with corn roll braids in her hair and glossy lips looked up from behind the computer and smiled at them. "Can I help you?" she asked.

Maria could see a sign on her desk that said "We speak English" then below it "Nous parlons francais" then below that "Hablamos español" and below that about eleven or twelve more of the same sentence in different languages.

"Si," she said, and began to ask about after-school activities for her daughter and weekend activities for her son.

The girl listened and then said, "Un momentito, por favor." She got up from her office chair and strutted in her high heels into a back room separated from the front by a wall with a window. Shortly after, an even younger girl emerged from the room and came over to Maria and her kids.

She spoke to them in Spanish, a Mexican accent, and showed them a piece of chart paper stuck to the wall that listed all the activities offered for the coming school year, 2030/2031. "This," she pointed a bit down the wall from the chart at a huge colourful calendar, "is everything going on this month. It will change of course next month so you can plan your weekends and such just by stopping in every now and then to see what is coming up. That is, if you decide not to register for anything."

As Maria studied the chart, Lenika and Angel wandered down the hallway to look in some of the other rooms.

The Mexican girl followed them and then said in a whisper, "Downstairs is the activity room. There is a Polish doll-making class going on right now. Would you like to go see?"

The Costa kids nodded and the girl led them down the hall to the staircase. A few minutes later she appeared back in the office where Maria was waiting.

"Si, I think I would like to register my son in the English language classes for Saturday mornings. They are paid for by the government, right? And both of the children should take swimming lessons. How much do they cost?"

"Here is the price list."

Maria looked at it and sighed. She knew they would not be able to afford all they wanted for their children just yet. Perhaps by the second session.

Then the girl asked Maria to fill out a membership form. When she took it back and began entering the information into the computer, she suddenly turned to Maria, surprised. "You live on Mulberry Street? So do I! I am number 154."

"Oh! We just moved into 149. With the blue mailbox out front."

The neighbours spoke for a moment longer and then the girl had to get back to her work in the other room. Maria went downstairs to collect her two little ones.

As they bused home, Maria told Lenika and Angel that the girl who they had met was named Juana and she lived across the street from them with her parents and two younger brothers. Felipe was Lenika's age and he went to Tove Elementary, and Martin was a year older than Angel. Martin was born in Canada, but the rest of the family had moved to London, Ontario from Mexico when Juana was seven and Felipe just a baby.

That evening after dinner Maria put on her nicest sweater and walked over to the house across the street, number 154. A beautiful woman with a dark complexion and rosy cheeks, a little older than Maria, answered the door. She was Julia Covas Marcos, Juana's mother.

"Pasa, pasa, por favor!"

Coffee was promptly made, and the two mothers sat in the kitchen talking as if they had known each other their whole lives. Maria was most curious to know about the schools the Covas Marcos children attended. Juana had mentioned she was a volunteer at the Culture Centre from Ambury High. Yes, Julia explained, Juana was in grade 11 and she did elementary at the LIP school in London before they moved to Ambury. Julia and her husband Roberto wanted her to study in a two-way immersion programme and London was their first choice over Toronto.

"Why did you want her to go to a LIP school?"

"All our children go to LIP schools. Felipe and Martin are both at Tove Elementary now. Well, Martin is just starting this September. You see, what we learned is that when they can study using Spanish along with English then they can learn much better than when they study only with English. It's because they came to Canada speaking Spanish and we didn't feel right just throwing them into all-English at school. How would they learn if they couldn't understand anything? We heard about the LIP policy as soon as we got over here, and we knew right away that not only did the research show it, but it just made sense that using Spanish in conjunction with English would make the whole learning process easier. And look how well Juana has maintained Spanish! And her English is excellent. She is more fluently bilingual than I am, and this is because of the opportunity and environment she had at the LIP school in London. Now, Felipe we started out in the English-medium school because he had made friends in the neighbourhood and they went to Honey Elementary. But he only went for a year because the teacher he had, Cheryl Simpson, transferred to Tove Elementary the year it opened, and since we all liked her so much we made an appointment to find out why she switched. We knew there must have been a reason. I mean, she had a good stable job at Honey and then the minute they open a new LIP school she heads over there. Well it turned out she didn't want to continue teaching in a school that operated against her principles. She believed in multilingual education for a multilingual population, with, of course, high quality English language instruction for non-Anglos so that they can function in the English environment of Canada too. But for her this had to be done through some sort of bilingual language policy, not a monolingual English policy, and bilingualism is what the Language Inclusive Programme is all about.

"When Ms. Simpson left Honey, so did a lot of students. Not only *her* students, but students from other classes whose parents wanted them to have the chance to study in their home language. Or

in a foreign language, for Anglos. I mean, she gave presentations so that we could learn about the benefits of the programme at Tove. If you get a chance to go to one, they are excellent. She runs them quite often, about once a month.” Julia took a sip from her coffee mug.

“But how can going to school half the day in Spanish help Lenika to improve her English?” Maria asked.

“Oh, there are many reasons! I am probably not the best person to explain it, but what I have learned through a bit of reading and research but also through my children’s experience, is that the more languages you learn, the easier it becomes to learn them. I mean, think about if you were to pick up and move to Greece tomorrow and you wanted to take a class about Greek architecture. Say the first semester you struggle through miserably because you don’t speak any Greek *and* you don’t know anything about architecture. But then the second semester you are wise and you take out a book in *Spanish* about Greek architecture and read it before starting back at class. Well, you are going to do much better that second semester because of the base knowledge you acquired by reading up about the subject in your first language. Now anything you learn in Greek, you simply have to learn what words or concepts those Greek words correspond to in Spanish. But you don’t have to re-learn the concept.

“It is the same thing with your kids. They are learning new material in school, as they should be. But if they are only allowed to study it in English, a language that is new to them, then it will be far more difficult and lengthy a process because they are attempting to grasp new ideas through a new language. However if they were in a bilingual programme, they would be able to grasp these new ideas in a language they do understand, and *simultaneously* learn about them in English too. The brain is like a great big piggy bank. You can contribute all sorts of different looking coins, but in the end you still have a lot of money! If languages are the coins, then everything you learn in one language transfers to other languages you study, like in the piggy bank, all your bits of linguistic knowledge contribute to your overall language balance. You come out with a fortune, made up of lots of different coins! Whatever you learn in Spanish feeds the same piggy bank as what you learn in English and what you learn in Russian and what you learn in Quechua. So that’s *one* of the reasons that it is important for children to have access to education in their first language, along with, of course, a new language if that be the case. It is a far more effective method, and plus, it keeps their self-confidence up and helps them to maintain a positive self-image even though they are not natives of the dominant cultural group.”

Maria was feeling befuddled, and she decided to change the topic. She would certainly have to think about all of this. Julia Covas Marcos had made her realize that she actually did not know much about second language education at all, and in fact she held a lot of notions on the subject that were

perhaps based on misinformation or common opinion that was not actually true. Still, as she walked back home half an hour later, she was not convinced that Tove was the right choice for Lenika.

Chapter Three

It was lunch hour on a sunny day in late March, 2027. Down the hall from where Mrs. Cunningham, the music teacher at Honey Elementary, was having a meeting with all the students interested in performing in the school's yearly musical, Cheryl Simpson sat in her classroom eating a sandwich and looking through a new book she had ordered. It was a book about the Chinese school system and she had been anxious for its arrival all week. She had a handful of students of Chinese origin in her class this year, and she wanted to familiarize herself with the educational set-up that they had experienced before coming to Canada. The squeals and giggles coming from down the hall, however, made her look up on more than one occasion, and eventually she put the book down and strolled over to see how the meeting was going.

The music room was full of children from all the grades at Honey. There must have been about 100 of them, and presently Mrs. Cunningham and Mr. Hart, the principal, were busy ushering a good two thirds of the chatterboxes into the gymnasium. Ms.Simpson smiled and returned a wave to a group of her last year students as they shuffled down the hall towards the gym. Another teacher, Mrs. Marquez, had also taken time off from her sandwich to come and see what the commotion was about. She stood beside Ms.Simpson and watched all the eager faces glowing with excitement for their upcoming participation in the musical, which was by far the highlight of the year. The teachers could hear the older students telling the younger ones about last year's musical, and by their descriptions one could easily be convinced it was the very best musical ever performed.

Then, as if simply thinking aloud, Ms.Simpson muttered something about how unbelievable it was that the school only ever put on Western, English language musicals. Mrs. Marquez turned to her, and Ms.Simpson repeated what she was thinking, this time very intentionally aloud. "In a school and community so diverse, and with such a rich supply of multicultural resources available to us, don't you think that something is just not right? I mean, every single year the musical is the same type of thing that reflects the same *one* culture, history, and language. One that only a proportion of our students and families relates to. Think how interesting it would be and how educational for all of us if we were to ask around to the different communities and find a really fun play from another culture. Then maybe we could have a star in the cast who is not from the dominant culture. Maybe it is time we let a kid from a different background shine as lead role."

Mrs. Marquez did not look impressed. "Cheryl, doing it any other way than this would be unacceptable. We are in Canada, and the language that unites us is English, and it is *our* culture that immigrants strive to be a part of. I think everyone agrees on that. That is why our immigrant students study English, it is a neutral language here. Our policy is neutral, objective, everyone is treated equally once they enter the borders of this country."

Ms.Simpson's eyes almost jumped out of her head. Neutral? Objective? There was no such thing. All teachers everywhere bring their own biases and prejudices with them to class. We are all products of our up-bringing, the society in which we are raised, our culture, our language. Nobody is neutral, and certainly no policy made by any government is neutral!

"Amelia, I appreciate that you want to treat every child equally, but have you considered that perhaps in a country like Canada where people from all over the world are living together in a society deeply rooted in *European* beliefs and practices, that equality is not equity? I mean, maybe certain students have different needs than others and if you are treating everyone the same then are you not necessarily neglecting the needs of some? *Same* is perhaps not *fair*."

Mrs. Marquez's face was blank.

Ms.Simpson continued, "Language policy in education is an extremely powerful tool for control because it imposes language behaviour in a system that is *compulsory* for all children. Authorities, whom we work for, use ideologies about language loyalty and a collective identity as a strategy for continuing their control and holding back the demands of people who come to this country with different views. And *our schools* are the vehicles, *we* are the vehicles through which this order of privilege is perpetuated in society. It is through our actions and practices as teachers that the agendas of those in power are implemented. Language policy is not neutral, Amelia. It is embedded in a whole set of political, ideological, social and economical agendas."

She stopped to catch her breath. All the children had filed into the gym, and Mrs. Cunningham and Mr. Hart had closed the doors to the music room.

Ms.Simpson and Mrs. Marquez were the only two left in the hall, and they lowered their voices as their discussion got worked up.

Mrs. Marquez said, "Well, what are we supposed to do, hm? We are given the curriculum and the school has its language policy. Our students study in English."

"I am not saying that we do not need a common language. Of course we do, and yes it is English in Ontario. But the families and individuals who immigrate to Canada *do* learn English and they learn it well. That does not mean, however, that the way our school system operates is fair or non-discriminatory. That does not mean that our policy creates the best environment for our multicultural

student population. Just look at any major Canadian city, let alone *American* city! Are the rich areas full of ethnically and linguistically diverse citizens, or are they predominantly white Anglophone? Are the poor areas full of ethnically and linguistically diverse citizens or are they predominantly non-white? I know you read 'Savage Inequalities' because I remember talking to you about it last year. Do you think that things have changed since that book was written? How different do you think Canada is from the United States? I don't know. I really don't know."

Mrs. Marquez sighed. She did not know what to say. She listened as her co-worker went on, "If we simply take what is given us by the government, the policy makers, the administrators, without questioning it, without asking if such policies are the most appropriate in terms of learning for *all* our students, then we are serving as soldiers of the system who carry out orders by internalizing the policy ideology and its agendas which are expressed in our textbooks and curricula. That was the biggest danger of the old system."

The old system, the English-only system in most of Canada, and French-only in Quebec, had been in place until the beginning of the millennium. Then things started to change, minority groups began gaining momentum and their voices were more and more heard. Certain key figures in various institutions of higher education around the country began pushing for the LIP policy that had been under construction for years. The past two decades had seen a huge influx of LIP schools and other two-way immersion programmes across Canada.

Mrs. Marquez responded, "But we teachers are not part of the process of making the language policies for the education system. We don't get training in language policy issues and their relevance in the social and political contexts."

"Teachers do now. *I* did."

Mrs. Marquez was about twenty years Ms. Simpson's senior, and had been trained under the old system.

"One reason that teachers internalized the ideology before, and I'm afraid some still do now, is that they were not part of the process of making policy and did not obtain training in issues of language policy and its relevance in the social and political contexts. The outcome of such an approach reduced teachers to bureaucrats who were agents of big government policies without having any say in their shaping and delivery. Now, teachers who go to school for the LIP programmes *do* get this training and preparation, and their professional input is valued in these matters. Until it is even more widely accepted that teachers are not supposed to be soldiers to the system, and until this is even more fought against, teachers and schools will be used to perpetuate the status quo."

Just then, Ms.Simpson turned and noticed Dan Hart standing across the hall from them. He was a tall, slender man in his late 40s, always dressed in a suit, always smelling of top-of-the-line cologne. His hair was dark and cut very short, he wore silver square-rimmed glasses and he shaved every single morning without fail. He was not married, never had been, and he did not have any children of his own. He had a considerable amount of money invested in a handful of large American companies. Mr. Hart lived in a large house in the suburbs but was often seen on Saturday afternoons strolling the central shopping district looking for a new designer jacket and tie. He always spoke politely to parents on the phone, and always gave high-fives to the children he passed in the hallways. He believed in good hard work and he believed that those who believed in good hard work were rewarded with well-paying jobs. Those without well-paying jobs must not have worked hard enough. He had been principal at Honey for a long time, and before that he was a teacher and before that a top grade student in London. He did not really care much for, nor care to learn about, life outside of Southern Ontario.

Ms.Simpson did not know how long Mr. Hart had been standing there, but he asked her to step inside his office. She pursed her lips at Mrs. Marquez and followed him in. She could tell he was steaming mad because although his face did not show it, his ears had turned a strange shade of reddish purple and he was breathing through his teeth. He closed the door. Any louder and it would have been a slam. "It is not your place to be spreading your opinions about language in this school. Honey has operated in this way since it opened in the late 1900s and there is no reason for things to change now."

She held his gaze and said, "No reason except that the population is increasingly diverse and therefore the needs of our students are increasingly complex and varied. The fact that things have not changed around here since the late 1900s is *precisely* why they sure as hell better start changing soon."

"English is the language of this country."

"No it's not."

"Yes it is, god dammit!" he slammed his fist down on the desk and the little golf figurine toppled over.

Ms.Simpson didn't flinch. She took a step closer to him and lowered her voice to almost a whisper. "English is one language spoken in this country, yes, and it is one of the official languages used in common spaces. But you know very well that it is not the only language spoken in Canadian homes, and therefore it is not the only language that should be spoken in Canadian schools."

"You are not going to change the fact that we need a common language."

"I am not trying to, Dan. Newcomers to Canada should be helped to learn English *without* having to replace their first language with it. There is no need for that, and it is robbing our country of great linguistic resources. Everyone should learn second and third and more languages, but *in addition*

to their home language. Nobody should be forced to forget the language in which they first learn about the world, the language they think in, that they live and breathe in. Especially not children. This system...this system that is organized to get everyone to operate under a homogenous English umbrella, is suffocating the diverse perspectives and ways of thinking that come with immigrants to Canada. Worse still, it is suffocating children who know a different reality than the new one they adopt in Canada.

"Language is personal. It is as personal to each of us as our name is. Our language is a form of expression, our way of relating to our environment and to each other. The way we use our language is what makes us individuals, and no two people use language in the very same ways." She paused. Then as if she knew she had passed the point of no return, "I am so sick and tired of your elitist views. You know as well as I do that maintaining monolingual policies like the one in place right here in this school is a tactic for maintaining the special status that English speakers have in this country and in the world. And it penalizes and subordinates people who are not born into that language or who do not master it in the same way as those in power. It happens all over the world. English use is promoted in order to gain status in the global community. Singapore, Ghana, Japan, Peru, the Middle East, you name it and English is the language of prestige."

"English is spreading as the world's lingua franca, the world's common language, Cheryl, and there is nothing we can do to stop it. We are doing our immigrants a favour by urging them into this culture and language."

"You're killing me, Dan, honestly. The global spread of English is being cleverly portrayed by Anglophone countries as a natural and necessary process. But it is being extended and has been extended throughout much of recent history in a very strategic manner, and for very political reasons. English is not an inherently superior language that people all across the world have just simply, innocently, and coincidentally decided to learn. Its spread is part of the process of maintaining domination in societies like ours, societies that are called democratic.

There is a lot of money to be made with this global spread of English, and people's learning has become a very commercialized and lucrative business, producing a product for export. The world's core English speaking countries are not unselfishly 'helping' other countries by teaching them English. Just look at American companies, for example."

Hart was trying his hardest to look like he couldn't care less.

Ms. Simpson persisted, "Companies are able to ideologically control English learners by getting them to be proficient in the dominant language. And our media doesn't help! The image of English as

a necessary tool is further spread by television and newspapers. They play a huge role in the brainwashing of society, by making English appear desirable and necessary.

"During the Super Bowl a few years ago there was an ad on TV for a Toyota Camry Hybrid that I'll never forget. It showed a Hispanic man and his son riding in the car and talking about what a hybrid is."

Mr. Hart looked up at the mention of football.

"The son concludes at the end of the commercial that his father is a kind of hybrid because he speaks English and Spanish. He asks his dad why he wanted his children to learn English, and the father replies, 'For your future'. This is a perfect example! The father has internalized the idea that speaking English, rather than Spanish, is best for his children. He does not consider Spanish to be important enough to pass on to his children, only English. This is extremely problematic, Dan, because the father is setting the example for his son that their Spanish or Latino heritage is not of equal value to their new American lifestyle. He is giving the message that the best thing is for his son to ignore his background and replace it with the one that surrounds them now. This may not be as easy for the boy as the father thinks, as the boy *looks* different from his dominant group peers, and may, whether or not he speaks English, have more difficulty than his white friends forming a positive identity in a dominantly white America. What's worse, the boy will learn from his father's example that English is the only language that matters, is valuable, is worth learning, and that will get him ahead in his American life, so he might as well scrap the others!

"In turn, this commercial has spread the message to the huge part of the public watching the Super Bowl that there is no need for immigrants in America to maintain their heritage language. The bottom line is that everyone speaks English and there is no need for anyone to speak anything else. This is preposterous! And the same thing goes on here in Canada. *You* yourself send this message to our minority students and their families when you make it very clear that the top priority on your list is that they learn to talk and think like *you*."

Mr. Hart was furious. He was gripping the wall and not making eye contact with Ms. Simpson at all. She was relentless. "Contrarily to all this, the need for linguistic diversity is huge, not just because understanding language helps us to understand the way the brain functions and the reasons certain cultures operate the way they do, but even more importantly, because if everyone suffered from monolingualism, then the forces of the dominant power elites would be even more easily applied. Language is a weapon for control, and it is vital for the rulers that those over whom they rule understand their language. Otherwise they cannot be ruled with their own consent."

"Nobody is trying to control anybody, Cheryl. Settle down."

“Just look at this article in the Globe and Mail,” Ms.Simpson opened the paper on Mr. Hart’s desk to the front section. “The spread of English is described as a process that just came about all on its own without any political or economical forces behind it. The author, Ingrid Peritz, is quoting Paul Payack of California based Global Language Monitor, who says, ‘English is becoming the lingua franca, the universal language...People tried Esperanto but that didn’t work. It’s just happening with English without anybody trying to make it happen.’”

She tossed the paper back down on his desk. “And we’re in 2027! This is precisely why the spread of English is portrayed in the media as natural and necessary. It serves the interest of those in power to have the public believe that they cannot get on without English. This way the government, often in collaboration with corporations, can control *who* learns English, *which* English they learn, *what* they do with their English skills, and *what* information they have access to or not. The danger in this, of course, is that it makes it easy to ignore the political reasons for the spread of English. By portraying English as spreading naturally, normally, and necessarily, the strategic power forces that are actually behind the spread are masked. As such, many people are less likely to question the power behind the spread. Indeed, that is a crucial part of the definition of hegemony. It works to have the public believe that the current state of affairs (i.e. English as a lingua franca) is the best and only way. Hegemony necessitates that people accept the status quo without stopping to ask *why* things exist the way they do. It feeds the notion that the way society operates now is the way it has always operated and should continue to operate.”

She stopped here, as she suddenly realized how long she had taken in Mr. Hart’s office. She brushed her bangs back across her forehead, gave him one final look, and turned to leave for her classroom.

As she opened his door and stepped out into the hall, she saw six staff members standing outside the door. They had evidently been listening, and as she emerged suddenly, they turned their heads and pretended they were looking at the posters in the lobby. Mrs. Marquez was the only one who made no effort to cover up her eavesdropping. She looked at Ms.Simpson and then walked into Mr. Hart’s office and closed the door.

Chapter Four

First thing in the morning on Friday somewhere toward the end of August, 2030, Carlos Costa called Honey Elementary School. The number and name of the principal were on their brochure. When the secretary answered the phone, however, Carlos had a difficult time getting his message

across, as she spoke only English and she didn't seem to be aware to slow down for his sake. He repeated his sentence numerous times and finally she managed to communicate that to register his daughter he had to come in person during their registration hours of 9 and 3 next Monday and Tuesday, or 9 and 12 on Saturday. He wrote down the information and wanted to ask if there were any documents required for them to bring to the registration, but the woman on the other end sounded so frustrated that he just thanked her and hung up.

Maria and Carlos sat down to organize their schedules in order to be able to attend one of the registration periods. They still had to get to the immigration office that week, as they had put it off long enough, and Maria was concerned about getting Angel registered at the Culture Centre as well because the last day was Monday. They agreed to ask Julia Covas Marcos to watch the kids on Tuesday morning while they went to the school for registration. The Costas had become quite good friends with the family across the street, and they were happy that their children had met others their age. Maria had an appointment at 12:00 at the employment office on Tuesday and so she would go there directly from the school. No, wait, that wouldn't work because Julia worked on Tuesday afternoons and so one parent had to be available to leave registration early if need be in order to pick up the kids in time for Julia to go to work. The employment office was on the other side of town and so Maria would have to leave by 11:00. Perhaps they could ask if the Covas Marcos' babysitter could also watch Lenika and Angel for a short time if Carlos were delayed at the school. Yes, it would have to be this.

Phone call to Julia and Roberto. No, it wouldn't work because the Covas Marcos kids started camp that week and they left with Julia at noon. Well, Carlos would have to reschedule his Monday meeting with the company because they couldn't go on Saturday because those were the same hours as the English language classes Maria had signed up for. Monday it was. One of them would be sure to collect the kids by noon at the Covas Marcos' place. They would have to get to the Centro for registration in the afternoon. Once organized, they felt better, and they began going through their envelopes of documents and records from what seemed like everywhere they had ever set foot back home. They put aside the papers they thought they might need on Monday.

Monday morning was grey and overcast and getting the children out of bed was a challenge. A promise to visit the library that evening got them moving. The family was out the door by 8:30 and rang the doorbell across the street at the Covas Marcos' house shortly after. Roberto flew out the door as Julia ushered Lenika and Angel inside. Juana, Felipe, and Martin were eating breakfast at the dining room table, and Lenika and Angel went in and sat down with them. Julia and Maria exchanged a few words and then the Costas turned and headed towards the school.

When they walked through the main doors, there were people scurrying around in every which way, and it took them a moment to collect themselves before deciphering the English instructions on a sign. It was directing them to the gymnasium for registration. They followed the arrows and entered the gymnasium where there were about 50 or 60 other people waiting in three or four lines. They were greeted at the doors by a woman who handed them a registration sheet and told them to fill it out and then wait in line. Unless they were new to Canada, in which case they had to wait in line *here* first before waiting in line *there*. They followed her directions and eventually made it through to the second line. This one was taking a lot longer and when they finally got to the table, the teenage kid sitting behind it mumbled a question about their daughter's ESL level and looked at them with boredom radiating from his face. Carlos asked if it was possible to have an interpreter for this part of the registration, as he felt there was important information they needed to convey about their daughter's educational history. The kid said no, but they could wait over *there* to see the principal at 12:00 if they wanted. Anything to move them along and get to the next customer. Maria and Carlos followed his pointing finger with their eyes and could see a corner of the gym occupied by about a dozen people of ethnic minority, Chinese, Hispanic, Arab, sitting in chairs. They looked at each other and shook their heads. Their schedule was too hectic to wait until noon to see the principal. The kid was fidgeting with a pen. After about twenty minutes of struggle with the registration staff, being passed back and forth between workers, the Costas were able to leave.

"Lenika!" Maria hollered that evening. "Lenika! Una carta para ti!"

Lenika rushed down the stairs, swung around the corner holding onto the banister with one hand, and into the kitchen. Her mother handed her the little pink envelope that had arrived in the mail and watched as she ripped it open. "It's from Elisa!" Lenika plopped herself down on the sofa in the living room where Angel was playing with his trains. Her cousin had promised she would write. Lenika looked at the handwriting. Elisa had beautiful handwriting, and the Spanish she used flowed so nicely on the page:

Querida Lenika,

It has been so long since I have spoken to you! How are you? How have the first couple weeks in Ambury been? You will start school soon, I know. Papá spoke with your father and he tells me that you are having some difficulties because of the language barrier. That is normal, sweetie, and it will

get better, I promise. I don't remember much about when I first moved here when I was very young, but I do remember the feeling I had for a long time where I thought everyone was talking about me all the time, even when I was right there beside them. Mamá says I cried for weeks and weeks when I had to go to a new school. I hope you are going to the LIP school because it would give you the chance to become fully bilingual and then when you are my age, you will still be able to communicate with our grandparents back home. Be sure to write to them, Lenika! Abuelita doesn't like it when I miss a single week. And your friend Ana, too, be sure to write to Ana. She misses you, I know she does.

Lenika, do your very best to keep up your Spanish. Once you start school, it will be hard because there will be a lot of English all around you and a lot of other languages as well that you will want to learn so that you can communicate with new friends. Of course, at a LIP school, everyone learns each other's language! But I am not sure you are going to the LIP school... it sounded like you are not, by what Papá said. But Lenika sweetie, keep up your Spanish so that you can still read about our country when you get older. That is why it is so important. If you forget Spanish, and replace it with English, then you are making it easier for powerful institutions to control what you think. It is not easy to see, but it does happen, my teacher talked about it with us yesterday at school.

If everyone forgets their first language and only learns English, then those in power can replace our true history with whatever they want. Since we can't seek out alternative sources of information in our own language, they can include or hide whatever serves their interest. They can invent us, teach us a history that is different from what our people actually experienced, different from what actually happened. They can alter events to cover, perhaps, their own wretched behaviour, to cover the way we were treated, and pass on knowledge that makes them look good or makes us look responsible for our own subordinate position in society. Without our language, it is difficult to resist this miseducation. That is why maintaining Spanish is, for us, so vital.

It has already happened with other minority groups in Canada like the Native Peoples. If our own languages are wiped out then knowledge is forgotten, the past is forgotten and it can be replaced with fiction. History textbooks can be warped.

I know it does not seem possible to you right now that you could forget Spanish, as it is the only language you know at the moment. But it will not take you long, Lenika dear, to pick up English, and then I want you to re-read this letter! Put it away in a safe place until a year from now. It will make much more sense to you then. I just wanted you to be aware of the ways language and language policy can be used as weapons for controlling people. I had to learn the hard way.

Evenings are starting to get cool here. I hope you brought all of your sweaters, although you will likely need a new, thicker one before long. Papá said that maybe you will come back to visit for the winter holidays. I will take you tobogganing!

Besos,

Elisa

Chapter Five

The run-down, grimy diner was empty except for one man sitting in a booth near the back. The stench of stale coffee and cheap beer had impregnated the walls and invaded his nostrils each time he inhaled. He was waiting for someone. He glanced at the clock on the wall and was partly annoyed that he was being kept waiting, but also partly curious if the clock was at all set accurately. He groaned and made the effort to check the cell phone strapped to his belt for the precise time, and yes, it was indeed twenty past six. His second gin and tonic arrived. The fat woman serving him smiled a toothy smile and chomped on her gum as she waited for him to pay.

Finally, Walter Bennington walked through the door and made his way to the habitual spot in the booth at the back. No apologies for being late, but a wave at the waitress and a request for a Guinness.

"I'm knee-deep in parental shit. Why don't they just home-school their kids if they think our schools are such shit. Besides, most of them came over here because our schools are better. So stop complaining."

Walter Bennington was a member of the board of trustees for the London Wentworth District School Board. He was in his late 50s, bald on top but had enough white hair in his moustache and

beard to make up for it. His cheeks were heavy-drinker red, and his stomach bulged out of his belted trousers, thankfully covered by the collar shirt he wore stretched around the belly and into the pants somewhere below. His armpits were sweaty, he smoked like a hog on a spit, and he had an unappetizing habit of breathing through his mouth, where sticky grey saliva gathered in the corners when he spoke. It was hard to look him in the eye without being distracted by the gathering goo.

Dan Hart grunted in response, and took a sip of his drink.

Walter Bennington stared at him. "So Simpson's giving you shit again, heh?" His eyes were brown marbles of ice, but there was a sense of delight wallowing behind them, as if Hart's woes were his pleasures. Schadenfreude.

Hart replied, "She won't stop with the language shit. She insists on speaking Spanish to kids who speak Spanish and she allows all the immigrants to talk in whatever language they want. She *encourages* it. The other day I caught her talking to another teacher about how our school musical doesn't accommodate a multicultural population. What does she want? To let the immigrants run it?"

Walter Bennington licked the saliva from the corners of his mouth.

Hart continued, "So I asked her to come into my office and she had it out with me. Ya. She was at my throat. I stayed calm, naturally, but then she started *insulting* me. Finally the bell rang and she got away, but then I called her down the next day and told her directly that she was in no place to be telling me how to run my school. Things have been operating just fine since I got there and the last thing I need is some new-age *scholar* waltzing all over things with ideas about how to make things 'fair'. What's fair is that the immigrants who come to Canada conform to the way *Canadians* do things, and that means speaking English in school."

He gulped back the last splash of gin and tonic. Walter Bennington said simply, "I think you should fire her."

Hart smirked. That was just what he had in mind, and just the reason for their meeting. There was no chance of anyone they knew showing up in this Ambury North diner. "I'll need your help on that one," he said.

"File a letter to my office stating that she is being insubordinate. I will take care of the rest."

"What about Jacqueline?"

"Don't worry about it."

Chapter Six

In a quiet house tucked away at the back of a horseshoe street, Meghan Kabytov slouched with her chin in her hand, gazing out the window. The computer was on beside her, but she had been away too long and the screensaver showed her smiley-faced friends at their university graduation party. From there in the living room, Meghan could hear her little sister opening a new box of cereal in the kitchen. "Kristin," she said without turning around, "don't have cereal before dinner."

Meghan was in charge of watching her sister while their parents were still at work. Usually it was their father who made dinner, but every now and then the others took turns. When her parents were late coming home, Meghan took the responsibility. She was a good cook. She had taken up an interest in vegetarianism when she moved to London for university six years ago. She was only home for a couple more weeks, after a summer spent in the south of Spain at her grandparents' villa. She and Kristin had been going together every summer since Kristin was six. Their mother called these trips 'gifts', and Meghan was never quite sure if this meant she was giving her daughters a gift, or she was giving herself a gift by sending them away.

The crinkling of a cereal bag from the kitchen. "Kristin! I said don't have cereal. I'll make you dinner if you're *that* hungry."

Kristin snarled at her and put the cereal box back in the cupboard. Meghan got up and put some water on to boil. In the brief moment she left the desk in the living room, her little sister had swooped in and was clicking around on the computer.

"Kris! Come on, you know I'm applying for the L2 year, don't touch anything."

Applying for the L2 year of teachers' college was indeed the only thing on Meghan's mind at the moment, although the application was not due until December. There was so much to think about, so many decisions to work out. An extra year was another commitment to make, especially after completing a four-year degree plus two years of teachers' college already. But it was worth it, she knew. Teaching was the profession to which she was dedicated, and of course the money was definitely a bonus. She will have done the mandatory two years, and she felt the L2 year, the optional third year which gave teachers specialized training for the Language Inclusive Programme, would be without a doubt her next step after this year. Kristin reluctantly got up from the office chair and went to lean on the windowsill, bored.

It was still bright and sunny outside, though the clock had already struck 5:00. The trees were leafy and green, and the little girl could see the branches of the large maple in their front yard rustle. A squirrel, she thought. Then she wrinkled her nose as she tried to remember how to say squirrel in Spanish. The wind blew and Kristin felt glad to be protected by the walls of the house. Otherwise, she was sure she would be blown away.

"It's *extraño* to see the branches move but not hear the wind. It's like I can feel what it would feel like if I were outside," Kristin said. Meghan didn't respond. She was sautéing mushrooms and onions. Kristin walked right up to her, "Don't you think it's *extraño*, Meghan?"

"You're such a little word-bird. Yes, it's strange."

"And you're a *cochina*."

"I know what that means, Kristin, I was in Spain too this summer remember? Don't say that."

Just then the front door swung open and the girls' parents were wisped in. "Whooo! It's a windy one!" Their mother, Linda, said as she unwrapped the summer scarf from her neck. She kissed Kristin's head, as it had landed in her stomach. Kristin hugged her mother until her father snuck up and tickled her underarms. Kristin squealed and Mikhail laughed. Then he went into the kitchen.

"This smells good, Meg! How's that application going?" He asked her in Russian. Meghan was Mikhail's daughter from a previous marriage, but Linda got on with her like she was her own. Meghan served her family the pasta dish she had prepared and she sighed as she sat down to eat.

"It's going well, but I'm feeling discouraged because I don't know if I have what it takes to be a LIP teacher. It is such a huge commitment and responsibility. And the requirements are so difficult. I just don't know if I am what they are looking for."

"Why do you say that?" Linda asked, as she poured wine for herself.

"Because to be a teacher, I mean, to get into teachers' college you have to really be prepared for three years of intense and important training. You have to demonstrate to the selection committee that you are someone who can prepare children to become independently functioning adults."

Kristin interrupted, "What *is* the L2 year?"

"It's just a third year of teacher training, Kris. You do your two years teachers' college like normal, with everyone else, but then you do a third year that focuses on things like multicultural ed, critical pedagogy, language policy, and stuff. And you pick a second language to concentrate in, and you study that language intensely for the year, enough to get a grasp on it to be able to communicate with students if you were teaching in a bilingual programme like the LIP. Or, you go through for English-medium like *your* classes.

"I would do the second language option. You can choose from a wide range of languages, but obviously there are certain ones that have a higher demand than others, in certain areas. Like I would probably do Russian or Ukrainian. They say you don't, but everyone knows you pretty much *have* to already know some of the language you pick. They pretty much expect you to choose a language you have basic competency in. Which makes sense, anyways, cause it would be hard for me to learn, oh, I

don't know, Hindi or something, enough to teach in it in only a year." Kristin kept on eating. Meghan continued to her parents.

"But it's even more than that to do the L2 year. A teacher is someone who not only helps the children learn skills in reading, writing, math, science, history, and all that, but also helps them learn to think critically, analyse information, and solve problems. Teachers are creative, curious, and have high expectations for their students. But also for themselves, so that they can model these characteristics for their students."

"But you are all of that, Meghan."

"Yes, but it's *more* than that, Linda. Teachers are *academics* and the qualities they exhibit are also what they ultimately want for all of their children. They participate actively, and teach their students how to participate actively, in the life of their society. They teach linguistic activism. I mean, they are people who are *aware* of the loaded agendas that they are helping to realize through their teaching and who should, therefore, provide differentiated and well-informed input through active involvement in the creation of language policies." Meghan sighed.

"They keep up with political and technical changes. They have the confidence, and breed confidence, to go forth into a diverse and changing world. Most importantly, teachers are people who are adept at working with, living among, learning from, and caring for people different from themselves, like what they teach at Tove Elementary, right Kris?" Kristin nodded, wide-eyed and mouth full.

She had finished grade 4 at Tove Elementary, and was now preparing to switch from the English-medium class into the two-way Spanish class for grade 5. This doesn't happen often, but her parents had met with Mrs. Gul-Chehra, the principal at Tove, and it was agreed that in Kristin's case a language proficiency assessment would be done and then if all parties felt she could handle it, Kristin would merge into the two-way immersion class.

It was thanks to the summers in Spain that Mikhail and Linda thought she could manage it, even though she would be with kids who had been studying bilingually since grade 1. They decided that they would see after she did the assessment. The truth was that they actually did not know first hand what their daughter's competency was in Spanish, as it was Linda's parents who had told them that they thought she was fluent enough. She had gone to an overnight summer camp for four of the 16 weeks she was there this past summer, and after that had ended, she spent most of her time with the friends she had made. She picked the language up quickly with the combination of immersion, help from bilingual grandparents and camp staff, a talent for languages, and a drive to learn. But both Mikhail and Linda knew, as polyglots, that acquiring a new language takes years. At least, they said to

themselves, she will have acquired conversational Spanish, if not academic Spanish. The latter was what they hoped the policy at Tove would develop.

Mikhail thought about what Meghan was saying. "Meghan, you're right. And you are the perfect person to take on the challenge that the L2 year will bring and the challenges that the job following your training will bring. Teaching is an extremely difficult profession, and everything you just said about teachers is part of the reason why teaching is one of the most highly valued and respected professions there is in this country. Along with, of course, the physical and emotional demands of that profession. That is why teachers are paid so well. It is a difficult job, and it does require years of training, but you are someone who I do believe is up to the task. Look at all the experience you have had with other cultures. You have studied in Russia, you have volunteered with new arrivals to Canada, you have worked and lived in other countries and in other languages. Teachers are people who have learned to respect cultural differences and embrace multiple perspectives. Like you."

Meghan smiled. "Thanks dad, that's nice. The languages thing is a whole other issue too. I was just looking at the requirements for the L2 year and I am going to have a tough time choosing a language to specialize in. If I don't choose one, then the other option is to go through for English-medium, like Kris's classes. For that you have to study a variety of languages and language history to understand how they work. I am not decided as to which option would be more difficult, really. You have to do six months abroad no matter if you choose English-medium or a language focus. I know I *do* want to do the L2 year, because the LIP schools are the only ones I want to work in, and plus, you're paid more. But it looks so hard! One of the focuses is on the role that language and culture play in a person's development, and we are expected to be well-informed about all the cultures and languages of the students in our classes."

"And rightfully so," added Mikhail.

Meghan's father had grown up in Russia, the son of a poor farming family. His schooling experience, when he moved to Canada, was nothing like what they foster in Canada now. He was forced to go to an all-English school, and everything that he knew and believed was completely looked down upon. His understanding of the world was so different from what the teachers expected, that he suffered from depression and an extremely negative self-image for years after high school. It was finally when he was accepted to a technical college in Toronto that he began to gain back a sense of self-confidence. He had assimilated completely to Canadian culture, and lost touch with most of his Russian roots. In fact, he hid it so well that when he met Linda, it was months before she had any idea at all that he was of Russian origin.

When they got married, Linda encouraged him to find and make those connections again. He tells her all the time that she is the breath of fresh air in his life. When they met, she was, indeed, the first breath of fresh air that he had had since he arrived. She wanted to know about where he was from and what his experiences had been. She was curious about who he was before he came here. She was the first person who wanted to know him inside out, even his first, brief wife had not cared so much. Linda wanted to know the Mikhail that even he had forgotten. And she grew to love the Russian in Mikhail as much as the Canadian in him.

Now, 20 years married and an established computer technician, Mikhail, with the help of his wife, made sure that his daughters understood and felt a connection to their Russian heritage. He wanted for them what he never had, growing up in a world disconnected from the world he held close to his heart. He spoke Russian to them often, and although both Meghan and Kristin considered themselves native Anglophones, they had fluent comprehension in Russian. Both daughters had been taking Russian lessons and art classes at the Culture Centre for years, and Meghan had spent a semester as an exchange student in St. Petersburg at the end of high school. There was no Russian offered as two-way immersion in Ambury, but the grade 1 English-medium teacher at Tove was of Russian background and so they sent Kristin to his class. She loved the school and loved the idea of switching to the two-way class for Spanish this year. She was so proud.

"Yes, rightfully so," agreed Meghan.

Chapter Seven

Two weeks until school began, and Lenika was getting more anxious by the day. Her mother needed help one afternoon installing an answering service with the telephone company and the combined English efforts of Maria and Carlos and Lenika were not enough to decipher the instructions in the phone package. This meant that a call to the company itself was in order. After Maria had asked Julia across the street to come by to help, she discovered that the phone company offered their services in Spanish. But she and Julia had coffee nonetheless, and Felipe found his way into the living room where Angel was reading 'Cuando Era Bebe', a book he had brought from home about baby animals.

Lenika followed him into the living room and sat down beside him on the couch. The furniture was rented but was more comfortable than what they had had back in their home country. In fact she loved sitting on the couch. And she loved it even more when Felipe was sitting beside her. She felt like she had a million questions for him. As though he, along with Elisa, were her link between this

life and her old life. What she lived here in Canada was so different from what she lived back home that really she felt like she had been born all over again and was beginning life anew. Perhaps she was.

Felipe went to the special school, the one her parents didn't want her to go to. As far as Lenika was concerned, if Felipe thought his school was good, then it was good enough for her too.

"Why is it called a lip school?" she asked her friend.

"Because the most important thing is learning to talk," Felipe explained. "We use our lips a lot because we are learning new languages."

Lenika nodded. She didn't really understand what the difference was between her school-to-be and Felipe's school, because she was going to be learning a new language no matter where she went, but what Felipe told her was that in his school all his friends spoke English *and* another language. They could speak whatever language they wanted, he said importantly, and half the day was spent in English and half in Spanish. Lenika listened, wide-eyed, as he described all the special activities they did at his school that they didn't do at the other school. She was still confused.

"But why can't I speak Spanish at my school?" Lenika asked. The thought of not being allowed to speak Spanish completely baffled her. What on earth would she speak? Was this what Elisa was talking about in her letter? Maybe she won't be allowed to speak at all! Maybe she would have to sit in the corner alone and quiet. Her face started to swell up and a look of horror came over her.

"No," Felipe said solemnly. "Nothing but English. The teachers there don't even speak Spanish. Only English. And all the projects you do have to be in English too."

"Pero no hablo ingles!" uttered Lenika, tears gathering in her eyes.

"It's not hard. Don't worry," Felipe said.

This was hardly a comfort to Lenika, and by the time Felipe's mother came to collect him from the living room, Lenika was completely terrified of her new school. "Mamá, why do I have to go to the English school? Why can't I go to the special school with Felipe?" she asked.

"Because we want you to learn English. You can't learn English if you are always speaking Spanish, can you? The English school will force you to learn quicker."

Julia gave Maria a look of disapproval. She clearly had not managed to convince her new friend about the merits of bilingual education. She would come back to it, she decided, at another time. Besides, Maria would see on her own soon enough. Julia thanked her for the coffee and waved to Lenika and Angel, then stuffed her hands into her pockets for the walk home.

When the two weeks finally passed, and Lenika was equipped with duo tangs, pencils, markers, dictionaries, all the necessary grade 5 equipment, all that was left was waiting for the long weekend to be over and Tuesday to arrive. Tuesday she started school at Honey Elementary. Honey Elementary,

Ambury, Ontario, Canada. Lenika repeated this to herself over and over as she lay in bed. This was her new address, her new centre of the universe.

Actually, she had mixed feelings about starting school. As she was optimistic by nature, most of her daydreams were exciting and naturally resembled her school experience back home. In fact Canadian school in her daydreams was identical to school back home, only in English. In her daydreams, this did not frighten her. Everyone she met in her mind, all her new friends and teachers, were so nice to her. She clung to these images and tried not to let the other kind slip into her head. The other kind stemmed from the unknown. Images of being alone, invisible, mute. She was excited for school to begin, yes, but it was hard to ignore the feelings of fear, anxiety, and dread that crept into her stomach every now and then.

A wailing voice rang out in Maria and Carlos's room. It was 7:00am and the singer on the radio-alarm informed them it was time. Maria went into her children's room and turned on the lights. She looked through the closet and picked out a pair of flower print pants, remembering Elisa's warning that girls wear pants to school here, a white long-sleeve cotton shirt, and a sweater. Lenika rubbed her eyes, pouted, glared at her mother who ignored it, and pulled on the clothes laid out. Angel rolled over under the covers but Maria scooped him up and held him on her lap for a moment. He squirmed and mumbled something but Maria insisted he get up too. He was going to the Culture Centre this morning for an English lesson. She kissed his forehead and placed him back in bed while she chose his outfit for the day. She then went over to Lenika who was brushing her hair, and tried to give her a hand. Lenika jerked her head away.

It was not that she didn't want to go. In fact, she did. But as the moment drew nearer, Lenika's imagination began to run away with her. She had barely slept a wink the night before, and for the first time it was not because she was thinking through her first day over and over in her head. For the first time it was because her mind was filled with horrible thoughts of losing everything she knew, everything she had learned back home. Why would Elisa say she could forget Spanish? She could never forget Spanish. Spanish was who she was. There was no Lenika Costa without Spanish. What kept her up last night was her imagination trying to figure out what she could look like without Spanish. She was scared.

Maria went back downstairs. "Lenika is not happy," she said to her husband.

Carlos was trying to decipher a newspaper article by comparing the English version of a story from the Globe and Mail to a related Spanish article he found in Hoy, the Spanish language newspaper.

"She will be fine. Once she gets to school and sees how much fun it is here, she will come home chattering away like always. Don't worry," he said, without looking up from the paper.

After a drawn-out breakfast, Maria and Carlos managed to get the children out the door and into the world for their first day as Canadian school kids. Angel shuffled along, content, but Lenika dragged her feet and would barely look at her mother.

"Lenika, *sabes que...*" her mother's lectures would always begin. You *know* you will make new friends at Honey. You *know* you have to be surrounded by the most English possible in order to learn. That just makes sense.

"Well it didn't work for Felipe," Lenika mumbled, looking at the ground. The *other* school. Just not *this* school. Not the school that made Felipe cry.

Maria and Angel said they would go into the school with Lenika and help her find her classroom. They managed to find the office and asked the secretary if someone could please show them to Lenika's classroom. Unfortunately, nobody would be able to at the moment, but it was not hard to find. It was up the stairs and all the way down to the end of the hallway.

They followed the directions and landed themselves in Mrs. Taylor's grade 5 classroom. She was a short woman with mousy brown hair who looked like she had not slept in weeks, the bags under her eyes were so dark. She had tried to draw attention away from the bags with a superfluous amount of blush radiating off of her high cheekbones. Mrs. Taylor came right over, smiling, and shook Maria's hand. She then bent down and looked Lenika in the face.

"Do - you - speak - English?" she asked. Lenika shook her head. "Well, you understood my question, so you must just be modest! Come on in and take a look around."

Mrs. Taylor winked at Maria and assured her everything would be fine. Then she said something else, quietly, and Maria smiled, not having a clue what she was talking about. She took her son by the hand and turned to make their way to the bus stop.

Mrs. Taylor told everyone in the class to find a desk, so Lenika sat down in a single chair off to the side by the window. As she looked around, she realised that everybody else had sat down at desks grouped together in clusters of six. She was the only one over by the window, all by herself. She panicked. Should she get up and look for a free seat in one of the clusters? She couldn't find the courage, so she shrank back in her chair and hoped no one would notice. No one did, for a little while.

Mrs. Taylor began the lesson by asking everyone to say their name and something really fun that they did over the summer. She went around the clusters and everyone told of adventures at the cottage, camping, riding bicycles, some went to a sports or music camp and some even slept over at camp for a whole month. Mrs. Taylor had nearly finished listening to everyone's summer story when

she fell upon Lenika, silent as a puppet by the window. Her reaction was not subtle. Lenika's hope of not drawing attention to her self vanished as her eyes met Mrs. Taylor's.

"Lenika! What are you doing over there? Come and sit here with Jenny and Becky." Mrs. Taylor motioned towards an empty chair, and Lenika took that to mean she ought to go and sit there. "That table is for our gerbils when we get them. Do you like gerbils?"

Lenika stared at the teacher, frozen. She could feel the entire class' eyes on her. She had no idea what Mrs. Taylor had said, but could tell it was a question. She nodded, to be safe.

Jenny and Becky looked at her when she sat down. Becky smiled and said, "Where are you from?"

Lenika didn't answer, but did her best to smile. Jenny whispered something to Becky. Then they giggled. Lenika flushed and fidgeted with her pencil, trying to look comfortable. She felt choked up, like there was a rock half-way down her throat that she just couldn't swallow.

The rest of the day passed in a blur. Lenika couldn't believe how busy and noisy everything was in her new Canadian school. The teacher was always trying to shout over everybody's voices, and the kids grouped themselves into little pods that were impenetrable. Jenny and Becky, her assigned friends, tried to talk to her. But when Lenika didn't know how to answer their questions or tell them what she was thinking, they carried on as if she wasn't there. They sped up their talk when they were speaking to each other, and although they thought they were being candid, Lenika knew perfectly well when they were saying something about her. She felt different, out of place.

At lunch hour she looked around to see if there were any others who were sitting alone. One little boy was over in the corner. She could see he was Chinese.

"I am Lenika," she said when she sat down. He didn't say anything but he looked at her and didn't turn away, so she figured it was alright to join him. They ate in silence for a few minutes. Then, "What's your name?"

"Frank."

"You speak Spanish?"

"I speak Chinese."

"You live here?"

"I moved here from Toronto. I was born in Toronto."

"You speak English?"

"A little."

"Me too." Frank offered her a piece of chicken. They ate in silence again. A few minutes later, a boy who was the spitting image of Jenny came up to them.

"Hey Frank, is that your girlfriend?" Another boy heard him and came over, grinning.

"What would your babies look like?" They burst out in laughter. Then the end-of-lunch bell rang.

That evening at dinner time, the Costa family sat together and Maria and Carlos asked their daughter how her first day had gone. Lenika could not hold it in any longer, and all the tears and sobs that had been building up all day came pouring out. She crawled onto her mother's lap. Maria exchanged a heart-broken look with Carlos. She rubbed Lenika's back.

"Were they unkind?" Lenika shook her head.

The truth was, nothing had actually gone badly, no one was cruel, really, except Billy and Josh, although neither she nor Frank had understood what they were laughing at. There was just simply something about being there that Lenika didn't like. A bad feeling. Carlos suggested it was the fact that everything was in English.

"Are there any other Spanish speakers in your class?" he asked.

Lenika shrugged. She didn't know. It had been hard for her to get to know anyone because all the rest of the children knew each other already. They had gone to the same school together since the beginning.

"Don't worry, my princess, it will get better."

Chapter Eight

Meghan turned the corner and pushed the coffee shop door open with her shoulder. She was so happy to be back in London. She hadn't seen France since before the summer holidays because both of them had been travelling. This was their second year of teachers' college and potentially the last year they would have classes together, if France decided to start teaching right away without doing the L2 year. When Meghan glanced around, she immediately saw France sitting at a small round table in the corner, reading from a massive paperback anthology. There was no mistaking her tall, slim figure. She had long red hair down to her waist and very delicate features. It had always been the running joke among their group of friends that France was born to be a ballet dancer and that she was actually supposed to be at the Julliard in dance, instead of at Western in education. The pictures they had of the two of them together always made them laugh because of the dramatic difference in their appearance, Meghan with her father's square shoulders and big bones.

France looked up and waved as Meghan came over. Her empty latte bowl was taking up half the table top, and she moved it so her friend could share the table.

"Hey how's it going? You been here long?" Meghan asked, eyeing the empty bowl.

"Ya, Knoll gave us about a million pages to read for Friday. You have him tomorrow? You'll be getting them too, I'm sure!" Meghan dropped her backpack on the floor, took off her jacket and flung it over the back of the chair, then began rummaging around in the side pockets of the backpack. She pulled out her wallet and asked if France wanted anything. Another latte, she'd pay her back.

When Meghan brought the two lattes, the girls sat back and re-capped their days. France had had three classes back-to-back. Wednesdays were not going to be easy this year.

"What about you? Have you figured out which language to do in the L2 year? You're still doing it, right?" France's latte hung in mid-air.

"Mhm. It's what I want. And besides, I told you about my daydream where I'm in an elementary classroom at Tove, right?" France nodded.

"Well, that's got to mean something!" France kept on nodding. The daydreams had *got* to mean something.

"And," Meghan said, as if she were about to reveal the last detail on a treasure map, "I am leaning towards Russian."

"I knew it!" France flashed a smile at her friend. She had been predicting for weeks that Meghan would go with Russian, even though she probably could handle Ukrainian, and certainly Spanish.

Meghan laughed, "What about you? To L2 or not to L2, that is the question."

"Yes. I am going to do it too. English-medium option."

"Great! What made you decide?"

"Well, I guess ever since I volunteered in the elementary school in Ambury East I've known that I need to work in a diverse environment. Linguistically diverse, you know? I just feel it is so much healthier to be in a multicultural environment where there are differences in people and ideas and attitudes, instead of in a suffocating, homogenous environment where everyone is the same. I've lived that too, in other places, and I have seen first hand how such an environment can lead to xenophobia and close-mindedness. Diversity, Meg, that's what I'm after. If I go into teaching and have the L2 year, then I can get a job in a school whose policy is grounded in these same principles, like the LIP schools."

"Yes."

"And I just think that to teach in Canada it is becoming more and more crucial to know how to communicate with people from different backgrounds."

"Oh totally. Like my sister, right, she goes to Tove and she's got this little friend named Miho. Agh, she's so cute! And whenever she's over, you know, they have their little sleepovers, I always talk to them about Tove Elementary and it just sounds like it is the kind of school where I want to work. To be honest, I can't even believe that schools exist in any other way. The language policy there is so cool, and Kris's friend gets super excited about it when she talks to me. Have you ever been in Tove?" Meghan brought her hands down from the air in front of her where she was waving them as she spoke.

"I went to their open house last year cause I wanted to see how they ran an event like that in all those different languages. It's pretty amazing, and yet it seems it would be silly to have it any other way. I agree. The way of life just seems so natural and easy, as if any school in Canada that's not set up that way is absurd!"

"It really makes me wonder, how is it even *possible* that newcomers to Canada are forced to study only in English?! Or any kid, for that matter!"

"I know. The entire school community at Tove constantly reaffirms for parents that it will help their children's thinking and learning in English *more* if they talk with them about what they're learning in their home language. This seems to be a message that does not get across in English-medium schools." Sips all round.

"Anyways, so I'm definitely going to do the L2 year and apply for jobs in the LIP schools around, or maybe go to Toronto."

"But," France sat up in her seat, "if you do Russian, you won't be able to teach in Ambury"

"I'd probably go to the Prairies or somewhere."

"Mhm. My cousin did it. The L2 year, I mean. Remember Ariane from the potluck? She did the L2 year at Ottawa and *loved* it. She took, um, Portuguese, and in one year she picked up enough to read books and stuff, and watch movies. Now she's teaching two-way immersion at one of the LIP schools in Ottawa, and she says that being able to speak her kids' first language is more important than she ever realized. I was talking to her the other day on the phone and she was going on about the difference between the kids who transferred from the English or French medium schools and the kids who just arrived in Canada and this was their first school. Apparently the kids who never knew any other school in Canada came into de first day shy, of course, but it didn't take them long to be the ones teaching *her* stuff about their countries and everything they know! Which is how it should be, she says."

Meghan nodded, then added, "Do you remember that book, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'?" Look of confusion on France's face, "No?! Oh, France, you've got to read it. If you do the L2 year, it will be required reading, for sure. Anyways, it talks about this banking system of education that has

been a God-awful tradition in teaching methods in a lot of countries but is changing in some places now, and I think it's not so bad in Canada anymore, but I guess I won't know until I start teaching myself. Anyways, that's what your cousin was referring to, probably, when she was saying how teaching is a *relationship* between people, not just the teacher depositing info onto blank slates."

"Ariane said that the kids who came from another school in Ottawa that didn't use their home language in the classroom at all were super quiet for the first week or something. They were so used to being the ones who were lost and even during the half of the day when she teaches in Portuguese, she said it was almost as if they placed themselves automatically in a passive, submissive role in the class, just out of habit. She said it broke her heart! It wasn't until they realized that during the Portuguese half of the day, *they* were the ones who needed to be helping out their Anglo classmates that they started to gain momentum and confidence.

"Oh, and she said it was so cute when the little Portuguese kids started taking on the leadership roles in the classroom. She said it is just beautiful to watch them interact. And the best part was after a few weeks when the kids became comfortable with the programme, she said the whole dynamic of the school day changed. Almost every kid had the opportunity to lead at some point in the day, and when it was not their turn, they had much more of an active interest in learning from their peers, instead of shrinking back in their chairs or tuning out, as can happen when a kid feels they cannot understand.

"She said once they got used to the way it worked, they were all alert for so much more of the school day, even when it was their weaker language, and the improvement in English for the Portuguese kids was enormous, and the Anglos were learning Portuguese without even realizing it! Their parents are always the most impressed."

"That's great. *And,*" last detail on the treasure map, "the best part is the Minority Language Bursary!"

"Oh, for sure! A nice 10 grand to pay your way! And L2 year teachers are paid more, right?"

"Definitely. Not sure how much more, but I think if you have the L2 year you are paid as much as Doctoral level teachers. *Tons.*"

"Thank goodness for that! I remember when my parents were still teaching. They only had to do one year of teachers' college and were paid, like, 60 or something! Disgraceful. Teaching is such an important profession... it's the profession that allows every other profession! I am so happy that teachers are much more highly trained now. Finally teaching is attracting people who want to go into it because they actually want to be teachers, and work for it, instead of going into it as a last resort. That's how it was before. Teaching was always everybody's last resort, if nothing better came along.

Can you imagine? And only training them for one year? They couldn't have gone much into depth on critical pedagogy or issues in multicultural education at all!"

"I know, it's way better this way."

"It's just nice to know that the teachers in the classrooms nowadays are trained to deal with the changing population."

"Increasing diversity."

"Ya, multilingual kids from all over the world with such different perspectives on everything. This way teachers are equipped to adapt their styles and attitudes depending on the knowledge their kids bring to the classroom. And *finally* the teaching staff is starting to reflect the student population in diverse communities. The more kids who have positive role models at a young age, the better. I can't imagine it being any other way!"

"But hold on a second. You said that your cousin learned Portuguese in a year? That seems so fast. Enough to teach in it?"

"Well, she did learn a lot, cause the L2 year really focuses on language learning. But, like most people who do a language focus in the L2 year, she had already studied Portuguese so she had a base. And she did her semester abroad in Brazil. Really, you can't possibly be a language teacher without ever having studied another language. Imagine being taught about something by someone who had never actually studied it! Like art, imagine having an art teacher who was a really great artist but had never actually formally studied it. Being good at something doesn't automatically make you a good teacher."

"Oh I know, and there have been so many studies done showing that the students of teachers with specialized training and who spoke the students' language showed greater academic gains than those with teachers who lacked such preparation. The old system must have left so many children behind. There were so many ESL teachers who were hired who were monolingual Anglophones!"

"Doesn't make any sense does it? Just because you speak English doesn't mean you understand what it is like to be a student of English. Or a student of any language! But anyways, Ariane said that in the one year she managed to pick up quite a bit, but of course she is not entirely confident for some of the academic language for certain lessons. But with the coaching system, she's totally fine. And the kids help out, like I said. The Portuguese speakers help the Anglos, which in turn helps Ariane! And for example she said that on Monday mornings her kids have gym for an hour. As she gets her prep time on Friday afternoons, she spends one hour on Mondays with a couple other two-way Portuguese teachers and the native speaker is kind of like the coach. They do this *coaching* thing a lot, apparently, in LIP schools. That way you always have a team to work with on keeping your proficiency tops. You

can run anything by the native speaker if you have to, for lesson plans and stuff. Ariane uses it a lot, he's like this resource, this walking dictionary!"

"Mhm," Meghan sipped her latte.

Chapter Nine

Lenika sat down at her desk and made herself small. Mr. Johnson, the English as a Second Language teacher welcomed everybody back after the weekend and told them that he hoped they had gotten all their sillies out and that they were ready to listen quietly. The class sat as still as freckles on a mushroom. This lasted about ten minutes into the grammar lesson. Then, Saki started to fidget in her chair, and then Ping had to go to the washroom. And then everybody was fidgeting. Mr. Johnson told them they were not listening properly and that the next person to make a disruptive noise would stay after school. A few heads turned towards the blackboard where there were no names in the red box yet. Nobody wanted their name in the red box. Then they had to stay after school.

Mr. Johnson handed out a work sheet to everyone. It was divided into three columns. The first one had lists of short words in English. *Before, After, During, Throughout, Until*. The second column had some sort of explanation of the word, and an example. In the third column, where there used to be black letters typed like in the other columns, there were instead white splotches where the words had been whited-out. Mr. Johnson explained that this exercise was to practice using adverbs of time.

Lenika looked at the words and thought she recognized a few of them. She had certainly heard *before* and *after* used by Mrs. Taylor, and she remembered learning what they were back in her home country. They meant *antes* and *despues*. That was easy. The third word she read in her head and didn't know what it meant. The fourth word was completely new to her. She was not sure how it even sounded, and as she sat staring at it hoping a sound would come into her head, Mr. Johnson called upon her to read the example of *while*.

"While I was at the rock concert, Sally paged me." Mr. Johnson corrected her pronunciation on *while, concert, and paged*.

Then he said, "Good. So *while* indicates that something happens at the same time as something else." Lenika muddled her brow. The same time as what?

He was explaining further, and she listened but the truth was that she didn't entirely understand what the example sentence meant. What was a rock concert and what was paged?

"The rock concert is on at the Excel Stadium. Imagine you are there and Sally pages you. You would say that Sally paged you *while* you were at the rock concert. Lenika, Imagine you are at the Excel Stadium at a rock concert with your father and his boss pages him. You would say...."

His voice curved sharply up to a higher pitch as he said this last part, prompting her for the answer. His big glasses stared at her. She could smell his hot breath and when his glasses bent down closer to her she could see little specks of yellow dandruff clinging to the hair above his ears. She was completely lost. The word *while* was the least of her worries. The entire scenario meant nothing. She flushed. She could feel everybody's eyes on her.

"No sé," she finally said.

Mr. Johnson looked around the room for someone who could answer his question and when he had his back turned, Francisca whispered to Lenika, "*mientras*." Oh! She looked back at the sentence he had written on the board and although she still didn't know what the meaning of the sentence was, she knew that Sally paged her *while* she was at the rock concert. On the page in front of her, Lenika assumed the third column must be for the Spanish word. She carefully printed the word 'mientras' beside 'while'. As soon as she had finished she felt much better, and she proceeded to fill in as many of the blanks with the corresponding Spanish word. Halfway down the page, however, she stopped cold. She could feel the warm, stale breath on the back of her neck again. She looked up and saw Mr. Johnson towering over her with a look on his face like she had committed a crime.

"No!" he declared. "I do not want to see any of you writing in the words in your other languages. You are not to be thinking in those languages. They will prohibit you from shifting to English. I know it is difficult but you must force yourselves. You must wrap your heads around English as it is. No translating. Do you understand?" Everyone was silent. "Erase those words please, Lenika."

Although she did not understand what she had done wrong, Lenika erased the Spanish words she had written in the third column.

"The third column used to have the translations of these adverbs in Spanish and Italian. I erased them because I do not want you using your first language in this class. You should not be using it anywhere, if you truly want to learn English."

Lenika was stunned. She knew the word 'erase' well, and gathered the correct meaning from what he was bellowing out to the class. He had actually *erased* the Spanish words. He would rather they listen to the difficult explanation of 'while' in English, than use their knowledge of another language to help them learn this new term. This just seemed so ridiculous to her. She already understood perfectly the meaning and use of the word 'mientras'. She just simply needed to be told

that in English, the word corresponding to that meaning was 'while'. She did not need to re-learn the concept of 'while'! What a waste of time, she thought.

That evening, Lenika sat in her bedroom at home, picked up a pencil, and addressed the letter:

Querida Elisa,

I hate going to school here. It's not like back home where people were nice to me. I have no friends. I miss Ana and my whole class, even Juan. Even Juan was nicer to me because he was joking when he called me a gobstopper. The kids in my class here make fun of me and they aren't joking because one girl said that she couldn't talk to me until I learn English. The teacher talks to me, but not in the same way as she talks to the other kids. It's like when she is talking to me she is talking to a baby. Like mamá used to talk to Angel. But then when she turns to talk to someone else, her voice sounds different and she talks a lot faster. I want to yell at her "I'm not a baby!" but everyone would laugh at me. They laugh when I try to answer a question in class. Like yesterday Mrs. Taylor was talking about the stars and I remembered a story mamá used to tell me about the stars that wrote my name in the sky. They were really there when I looked up! And in grade 4 back home I made a planetarium in a cardboard box that showed all the constellations with glow-in-the-dark stars. I got an A+ on my project! When I tried to say "star" in class yesterday, nobody understood me. I hate being a Spanish speaker. I wish I was born in Canada. Then English would be easy. I would know English as good as everybody else. I wish papá never brought us to Canada. But mamá says it will get better. Jenny said something to Becky and then they both laughed. Later Becky told me that she didn't think I was stupid, so I like Becky. But all the girls in the class are already friends and I usually don't have a partner in gym class.

Sometimes Mr. Cory tells me to go in a group of three because nobody wants to be my partner. Ana and I were always partners in gym back home and we made the best gymnastics routines! The other girls always tell me what to do here. They are bossy. Once when I didn't do what Jenny asked me because I didn't know what she meant, she told me she would tell Mr. Cory I hit her if I didn't do it right next time. I

understood what that meant because she put her face really close to mine. Jenny always tells me she will get me in trouble. I didn't know how I could be in trouble if I didn't do anything wrong but then when Mrs. Taylor's mobile fell off her desk into the dustbin and Jenny told her that Alex took it, Mrs. Taylor made Alex stay after school. But I told Mrs. Taylor that Alex didn't take it and when she found it in the dustbin she gave me and Alex a butterfly sticker.

Besos, Lenika

Maria had to force Lenika out of bed on Monday morning. She cried and screamed and put up her toughest fight, but in the end she was up, dressed and sitting at the breakfast table in a pout. Carlos sighed and put his newspapers down. "Mi tesoro, que pasa? You have already made two new friends at school. Don't you want to go and see them? Your teacher is nice, isn't she?"

Lenika didn't move or look up at her father. He tried again. "Princesita, you will adjust. I know it is difficult at the start. It is difficult for all of us. But we have to help each other out. You go to school and learn English and then you have to help Angel. He doesn't go to school until next year. So he needs you to set a good example. If he sees that you love Canada and are enjoying your school experience, then he will be excited to go too. You know he looks up to you, Lenika."

He stopped there to see if he had broken through a little. But when she slammed her cereal bowl down in the sink and stormed off to her bedroom, he knew it was not going to be as easy as he had thought.

What was hardest for him was that his daughter didn't always tell them right away what it was that was bothering her. Carlos and Maria had a history of long nights up in bed wracking their brains trying to deduce from the clues they had each gathered from Lenika what exactly the problem could be. There was one time in particular he remembered. Lenika was nine years old and when she came home from school one day, she rushed into her room and closed the door. Well, Maria and Carlos knew only that she had had her first choir practice that afternoon and that she had been nervous that morning. She and Ana had been practicing for weeks so that they could get placed in the front row where the good singers got to stand.

Maria went over to the bedroom first, knocked on the door, and then went in. Lenika was under her bed. Not a good sign.

"Lenika?" A small head full of soft brown curls popped out. Maria scooped up her daughter and sat her on the bed beside her. "What is it? Did you have a bad choir practice?" Lenika shook her head. Maria was left guessing. "Did you and Ana have a fight?" The curls shook, Maria searched. "Tell me, my love, what is bothering you?"

Lenika just said, "Nada."

Later on, Carlos made an attempt. "Lenika?"

"Si"

"Is something the matter?" She didn't say anything. "Did you have a bad choir practice?"

"No"

"Do you want to talk about anything?" Her tiny face looked up at him. His heart melted. But no, she did not want to talk. He went back downstairs.

That night Maria and Carlos went through every possibility. Maybe Juan was teasing her. Maybe the teacher had been upset with her over something. Maybe worse. In the morning, Lenika came down for breakfast wearing only one earring. Maria wouldn't even have noticed if Lenika hadn't put her hair up in a ponytail. She gently asked where the other one was and Lenika said she had let Ana try them on and they dropped it down the sewer grate. Maria looked at Carlos who was pretending not to listen at the sink. They were both relieved it was only this that had been troubling her. Lenika's earrings were special to her because she had had to wait until she was 9 to be allowed to get her ears pierced, but they were not expensive, and a new pair could be picked up at the market on Sunday.

Such episodes were made even more complicated in Canada now, because of the increased range of possible upsets. Even if they tried to guess, Maria and Carlos knew they in fact had no idea of what she was going through. They had never been through it, and their immigration experience as adults was very different than for a ten year old girl. That morning, Lenika eventually gave into the fact that she had no choice but to go back to school yet another day. She picked up her lunch box and headed out the door.

When she got to school, Frank was waiting for her. They went into the classroom and sat down in their seats with a little shrug, wishing they could sit together. But seats were assigned. Today, Mrs. Taylor told the class, everyone was going to write about their family. Lenika took out her notebook. As she pondered what she would say about her family, an overwhelming sense of urgency took hold of her. It was suddenly extremely important to her that her family appear *normal*. The first line of her composition began, "My mamá and papá are very like Canadian..."

Chapter Ten

Ms. Simpson rolled over on her side and looked at the clock on her bedside table. 3:24am. She hadn't slept a wink since she had put her book down and switched off the lamp about four hours ago. She switched the lamp back on and sat up in bed, bunching the pillows behind her back. Her mind was racing. Something was bothering her but she wasn't quite able to pinpoint what it was. She knew she and Dan Hart disagreed on a lot of issues. Well, that was an understatement. They had completely conflicting views on nearly everything. It was as if they came from different worlds. No, it was as if they lived in different worlds, even while they worked at the very same school. They saw everything differently, had different priorities and goals. She bit her lip. She hated that *he* was her boss. That was what perplexed her. In her head, she replayed the afternoon's conversation in his office. As long as she worked for him, she had to abide by his rules. She had to do things the way he wanted them done, and she knew if she didn't then he would find a way to have her eliminated from his system.

She ran her fingers through her stringy hair. She hadn't washed it in days. This thought suddenly made her aware of the stress she had been living under for the past days, weeks, since she started working at Honey almost three years ago, actually. She looked around her bedroom and realized she couldn't remember the last time she had cleaned or even tidied. There were dust balls in the corner and her cat was curled up asleep on a mountain of clothes she had not put away in days.

She could not go on like this. She couldn't keep working for Hart, but what choice did she have? The children at Honey needed her and she needed them. Where would she go? Should she finish the year and then have a talk with Jacqueline Kelly and see what she advised? Finishing the year would mean working with Hart for another two and a half months. But not finishing it would mean leaving a class full of bright and energetic grade 1 students whom she had grown to love, and with whom she had built a mutual relationship of trust and commitment. Can someone continue working for an establishment they fundamentally disagree with? *Should* they? She couldn't. It was eating away at her, as if she were drowning in a murky, toxic swamp. She could barely stick her head out to breathe because she was chained to the bottom. And Hart was standing on the shore with a whip. He was not alone. There were others on the shore. More on the shore than in the goop. Funny thing was, when she thought about it, it was clear that those holding the whips were far fewer in number than those enduring the lashes.

Under a language policy like the one at Honey Elementary and so many other Canadian schools, it was small innocent children who were being penalized for not fitting a specific mould. You don't fit the mould, you struggle to succeed. You don't play by the rules, you don't make it very far. Ms.Simpson refused to live under such conditions and she was determined to join with others who refused as well. Ambury's minority students and families, for instance. She would talk to them, hold meetings, find support. She had to get out of an institution that forced her into a position of submission to authorities she loathed. Authorities that forced her to help them perpetuate the cycle of domination over non-white, non-European descendants that they had enjoyed for centuries. She would not work in a position that made her into a pawn serving the interest of the power elites. It was about time the rest of the population was empowered, and *that* was the movement she wanted to be a part of.

Monday morning at school Ms.Simpson gathered her children together on the carpet and told them she had something very serious to discuss. She explained that this was the last year she was going to work at Honey Elementary, and so next year she would not be their teacher, nor a teacher in their school at all. Tears came to her eyes as she looked around and saw 21 sad faces staring up at her. Daniel began to whimper. Ms.Simpson felt her heart tugging at her throat and she opened her mouth to say something else but nothing came out. A minute passed with no sound except the ticking of the clock, and then finally Ms.Simpson found the courage to go on. She took Daniel on her lap and dried the tears that were streaming from his face. Daniel was one of the students she had had two years in a row because last year she had taught a split grade 3/4, and they had become good friends.

"I understand why you're crying. It's ok to cry," Ms.Simpson told them. "You see, I have decided to move to Toronto to teach there."

A tiny voice from somewhere on the carpet asked, "Why don't you want to teach us any more?"

"It's not that I don't want to teach you, sweetheart," she thought about the rest of this answer carefully. "It's just that sometimes you realize that you belong somewhere else. Sometimes it happens that where you are and what you are doing is not actually where you should be. It will happen to all of you one day that you feel you need a change. I know that many of you have already felt this way. Like when you moved to Canada, you might have felt out of place for a while." Some heads nodded. "Well that's sort of how I feel. Out of place. Toronto is where I will be more comfortable." She waited for someone to say something but nobody did.

So she asked, "Would anybody like to share a story about when they felt out of place and what they did to make themselves more comfortable?"

Qing raised his hand. "When I moved to Canada I was just little and I didn't understand what anyone said and I felt out of place. I wanted to go back home and see my friends in China. But my

mom and dad said I had to stay here and that I would make friends here. When I made my friend William I stopped wanting to go back to China because now I had a friend.”

“Thank you Qing.” She turned to the rest of the class. “That is very similar to my situation right now. When I go to Toronto, I will make friends too but I will never ever forget the friends I have in Ambury. You are all my friends, and I will miss you very much. I hope you will write me letters and tell me everything you accomplish and everything you dream of accomplishing next year and long after.”

She placed Daniel back down on the carpet and asked if anyone else would like to talk about a time they felt that they needed a change.

The rest of the morning was spent sharing stories and experiences, and by the time the lunch bell rang, Ms.Simpson felt much better about her decision. She never doubted that her students would be fine, but she felt happy that they knew the truth and she was able to talk about it openly with them. She also felt better because of everything that her students had said to her that morning. They had told her about times when they had been picked on, times they had felt alone, times they had wished they were somewhere else, and Ms.Simpson felt glad to know that they understood.

As Ms.Simpson was washing her dishes about two days after she sent in her letter of resignation, the phone rang. It was Jacqueline Kelly, the superintendent for Ambury Elementary schools.

“I was wondering if you would be available to come and speak with me this week about your resignation from Honey Elementary, Cheryl,” she said, sounding somewhat concerned.

“Of course. When is good for you?”

“Um, how about tomorrow at 4pm. Does that give you enough time to get here?” School was out at 3:45, but Ms.Simpson agreed and wrote it down in her calendar.

The next day she left school right away after the bell rang and hurried her way through the rainy streets of Ambury to the Board of Education building. She walked into Mrs. Kelly’s office at 4:00 on the nose.

“Have a seat. Thank you for meeting with me on such short notice.”

Ms.Simpson closed her umbrella and took off her jacket. “My pleasure.”

Mrs. Kelly poured them each a cup of coffee and sat down across from her at the big conference table in her office. “Kenyan,” she said, and nodded at the coffee as she handed it to Ms.Simpson. “My brother sends it to me from his farm back home.”

The lights were on in her office because the day was so grey outside. Mrs. Kelly began by asking Ms. Simpson to be honest with her. She confessed that in the past she and Dan Hart had not seen eye to eye either and so she was curious as to the whole truth behind Ms. Simpson's resignation.

Ms. Simpson cleared her throat and began, hesitantly at first, "Well, I guess I just got too fed up with his uninformed view that knowing one language hampers a child's learning of a new language. Like our stomachs, if we overeat we won't have room for dessert. This is plainly not true when it comes to language. There is not a limited amount of room in our brains for languages. He has gone so far as to convince immigrant parents that since their child needs all the capacity for *English* language learning that he can get, he had better stop filling his head with their first language! I started feeling like I needed to intercept families who were leaving his office just to clarify that what he said was probably a myth and that research actually shows the opposite of what he claims. Our brains have an innate capacity for language learning, and having proficiency or even familiarity in one language is a great help to learning a second because it means not having to start from scratch.

"Like badminton. If a badminton player wants to learn tennis, she doesn't have to re-learn the functions of a racquet or the notions of serving and volleying, she just builds on what she knows. Just the same, someone learning a new language draws on what she knows about language already from the one or ones she does speak and this knowledge becomes a learning tool. Anyway, I have been through all this with Hart, I mean Dan, already."

"He said you talk a lot about the LIP schools when you discuss language policy with him."

"You have spoken to him about this?"

"Just over the phone, briefly."

"Well, yes, I really believe in the Language Inclusive Programme. I wish all schools were set up that way. I guess I talked so much about them to Hart because I saw such a stark contrast between his view of the role that schools play in political agendas, and Ted Wallace's."

Ted Wallace was the man behind the philosophy of the LIP schools in Canada. He was a big figure in the political and academic world back in the early 2000s and then spent a few years travelling and doing research on language policies in different settings internationally before settling in Toronto. Then he joined up with a woman who was doing post-doc work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Adila Gul-Chehra, and they started pushing to get more of the LIP schools in place outside of the major city centres. London was as far West as they had gotten in Southern Ontario but with the government connections they had between the two of them, they were able to work with Ministries all across the country. For the past decade or so LIP schools had been opening up from coast to coast.

Ms.Simpson admired Ted Wallace immensely, and she had read everything he had written, not only on language policy in education, but also on critical pedagogy in general and the politics of language, applied linguistics, and a wide range of other subjects. She had never met him, but had seen him speak at conferences throughout her studies. He was in his 60s now, and ever since he was about 45 or so, he had been confined to a wheelchair. It was a snowmobile accident. Ted Wallace had married a young Swedish elementary teacher during a sojourn in that part of the world as a graduate student. They came back to Canada eventually and both taught at a LIP school in Toronto. Now they had children who also taught at LIP schools around Ontario and Quebec, and Ted had quieted himself on the education scene.

Mrs. Kelly asked Ms.Simpson to elaborate.

"Well, Dan just seems to have no concept of how language policy is the primary mechanism for organizing, managing, and manipulating the way people use language in society, and it is in *schools* that the continuous battle between different ideologies is acted out. I started to feel like he and I were representing two opposite sides of this battle, and as he was in a position of authority over me, I had to get out. I can't work for him anymore, Jacqueline. He just doesn't get how a language policy is a manipulative tool that decides which are the preferred languages, the ones to be legitimized, used, learned, by whom and where and when and all of that! And he doesn't get how *his school* is a place where harmful language practices are perpetuated in covert and implicit ways."

"Oh I think he gets it, alright. I think he understands this just fine." A dry smile.

"Well, in this day and age with diverse, multilingual, multicultural countries, different groups are fighting for recognition, self-expression, and mobility, and they are butting heads with those in power who are eager to maintain homogenous ideologies. The worst of it is that in societies like Canada, language policies are put forth that appear on the surface to follow rules of pluralistic, *democratic* principles that promote language learning, and yet the actual policy is often in contradiction to these values."

Mrs. Kelly had her hands folded across her lap. She sat up slowly and said, "I know. Hart the Fart still won't accept that dual language instruction, that is, additive bilingual instruction that benefits all members of society, is entirely possible, affordable, and beneficial on a large scale. It is just that we have only recently starting filling in the lack of qualified staff, and the lack of understanding about bilingual education and bilingualism amongst the general public and especially minority groups themselves.

The support is growing as word spreads and positive results start to show. But it takes years, and politicians want immediate results. They don't think long-term. They don't think a couple

generations down the line. They want profit, power, now! Unfortunately languages don't work like that. They take time, and they are not static, measurable, stuff that people like Hart want. And so widespread is the misinformation that I feel sometimes it is minority language groups themselves who LIP educators are up against. They have internalized the appealing maximum-exposure myth, and goodness, don't even get me started on the portrayal of English in the media!"

Ms.Simpson laughed and nodded. She had no idea that Mrs. Kelly was so like-minded. Jacqueline went on. "Hart has either never seen or, more likely, never paid attention to how much language affects the self-concept that children develop. If a child perceives negative attitudes towards their first language in the school setting, then they will want to get rid of that language in favour of the one that gets them into the 'in' crowd. Subtractive bilingualism. A programme that integrates the languages of all the students in the class enhances the status of those languages and thus the speakers of those languages. In a good language inclusive programme, everyone in the school promotes the idea that the languages that children bring to school are all prestigious and appropriate for use by educated people." She paused there and poured herself another cup of coffee. Ms.Simpson shook her head, no thank you.

Then, again, slowly, Mrs. Kelly said, "Cheryl, I have something to tell you. And something to ask you."

Ms.Simpson tilted her head to the side attentively.

"Ted Wallace is opening a new LIP school in Ambury."

Ms.Simpson almost fell out of her chair. "What?! He is?"

"Yes. You know the building they are restoring across the river by the skating rink?"

"The one that used to be the hotel?"

"Ya. That's going to be our third LIP school. Spanish and Italian. In September."

"September!!"

"Mhm. I don't know if he will be principal or if there is someone else in mind. Possibly Adila Gul-Chehra."

"What! She is coming to Ambury too?"

"Mhm. I thought you might be excited by this news. I asked you to come here today so that I could tell you in person, and of course to be sure that your philosophy fit with the LIP school philosophy, which I had no doubt it did. You have simply been waiting for two-way Spanish to be offered."

Ms.Simpson waited. Her heart was beating faster than a scratched CD.

"Would you like to teach grade 5 two-way Spanish there in September?" asked Mrs. Kelly. Ms.Simpson couldn't contain her glee.

Chapter Eleven

Meghan took a deep breath and pushed the auditorium door open. She thought she was late, but the class had not started. As usual, the entire room was full of about 60 noisy students trying to get them selves settled before the professor started the class. She perused the rows of seats from top to bottom trying to find one that was free. Back left, where she always sat. She made her way there and unpacked her notebook and pen. The professor was a man in his mid-fifties, a bald forehead and nice rosy cheeks. Meghan liked him and she liked that he was wearing jeans and a t-shirt.

There were still about four or five students huddled around him on the podium at the front of the classroom and she could tell he wanted to begin but was trying not to be rude. Clearly their questions could wait until after the lecture, or better still, for his office hours. She slouched with her chin in her hand and waited. The girl next to her was yakking on a cell phone, and there was a couple in the row in front of her who were sharing a take-out container of Chinese food. She could smell it and it reminded her that she had brought an apple, which she vowed to wait until break to eat. These evening classes always fell right over dinner time, she thought, and proceeded to devise in her head the routine she would follow from then on. Dinner should come before class, she concluded, this way she could go for a drink after class if someone asked her, and not be starving. She smiled at her plan, and began munching on the apple.

Dr.John Knoll was testing his microphone, a miniscule little clip-on on his collar. Yes, the class chimed, they could hear him.

"Good. Last week we were talking about the role the teacher plays in a classroom. Today I want to carry on that discussion and ask you what role school in general plays in a society." He sipped his silver travel mug, then nodded at an eager hand in the front of the class.

"Schools are spaces for learning."

"Learning what?" he pushed.

"Learning the skills needed to function in a literate society, so reading and writing and analysing."

"Ok. And in what language should these skills be taught?" There was a hush in the classroom. Then a hand at the back

“Well, in Ontario, students need to be able to read and write and analyse information in English because that is the common language used in greater society. That’s not to say that they shouldn’t *also* know how to do these things in a second language, or in a language that they know as a home language before English.”

“Ok. Hands up if English is not your first language.” About half the class raised their hands.

“What do you guys think? What language should children be taught to read and write and think in?”

Girl in a red sweater, “Any language they want. As long as they are simultaneously learning the society’s common language, then it doesn’t matter what language they think in.”

Dr.Knoll seemed to like this answer, and he continued, “One important outcome of multiculturalism, as it exists in a country like ours, and especially with regards to education, concerns conceptions and definitions of *knowledge*.

Who will disagree with me that schools are places where children are given the chance to shine, the chance to grow and develop and think as individuals?” Nobody. “*Who* will contest that schools are places where justice is born, where kids are taught to ask questions about their society and think outside the box and learn to take an active role in the shaping of the world? *Who* will refute that?”

Meghan took it. “That’s a load of meaningless jargon. Traditionally schools have held the role of perpetrators of the status quo, meaning that their aim is to educate all children, regardless of their heritage or background knowledge, in the values, goals and beliefs of the dominant culture. What immigrant children bring to the classroom is not always valued, and therefore they are at a severe disadvantage entering a Canadian school in comparison to their Canadian-born counterparts. I am not saying that this grim outlook is *necessarily* the way things operate everywhere here, and I know certain policies like the LIP have been designed to counter this problem. But the old system, and what is left of the old system, prioritized certain bodies of knowledge while discouraging or suffocating other discourses.”

Dr.Knoll, “I am sure that some of you experienced the system Meghan describes first hand. You, as teachers, are going to do your utmost to sever the ropes of tradition and break free from this assimilative model. You are going to recognize that under this model there is little or no appreciation of the knowledge that minority groups have, but instead they are expected to relinquish it and acquire the knowledge associated with the dominant group.” Sip from the mug. “After the worst of the outright assimilative models, came a model referred to as the recognition model in which there was acknowledgement of different forms of knowledge as valuable and important, and minority groups were given credit for their knowledge and were often encouraged to maintain and cultivate it, at least

for a temporary period. This is perhaps the model many Canadians would agree is still in place in some areas currently. The recognition model does not, however, go far enough for a society as multicultural as Canada. Our history and our present are built with the contribution of people from all over the world.

“The current models for education, and the ones I feel teachers in this day and age and in this context need to embrace, are called interactive models because the knowledge of the minority groups is seen to affect that of the dominant group and enrich it in a two-way interaction. The minority groups are no longer expected to simply accommodate or adjust to the ways of the majority, and it is no longer sufficient to simply recognize or even merely include their knowledge. Rather, the knowledge that newcomers to Canada bring with them is to be regarded as part of a new and enriched knowledge, perceived as an important part of the funds of knowledge for the society as a whole. Unfortunately in most societies it is still the assimilative model that is being practiced.” Heads nodded across the auditorium.

A question from the spring roll eater in front of Meghan, “If it is widely accepted that the interactive model is the fairest for learning in a multicultural society, then why is it that the assimilative model is still so widely practiced?”

Dr.Knoll opened this question up to the class.

A man at the back, “Maybe because there is resentment from the dominant group members who want to maintain and preserve their place in society, and they see the ‘other’ forms of knowledge as challenges to their values and existence. The different forms of knowledge are viewed as deficient, and the knowledge of the dominant group is considered the only knowledge of value. Even in situations like Ambury where multiculturalism is recognized, the education system (excepting the LIP schools) still strives for homogenous knowledge, which it believes should be owned by all.”

“And as teachers, you must be prepared to *challenge* powerful sentiments or discourses in the wider society.

“The affective dimension is as significant as the cognitive dimension. In order to create a positive affective interpersonal environment, you must affirm the value of students’ and parents’ multilingual and multicultural abilities in the face of widespread opinion that immigrants should abandon their first languages if they want to integrate successfully into Canadian society.” Dr.Knoll paused to let this sink in. “You will face the challenge of *abstaining* from the illusionary security of one-size-fits-all instruction in favour of a pedagogical approach built on what each child brings to the classroom. In other words, as a teacher today, you must be prepared to challenge aspects of the broader

power structure of our society by affirming that the students' cultural and linguistic capital should be the centre of their foundation for learning."

The professor looked around to make sure there were no hands in the air, then clicked to the first powerpoint slide. "And so, if we agree then that part of the role of teachers in a multicultural Canadian context is to develop the appropriate knowledge and awareness of the social, psychological, cultural, political, and economic forces that affect the learning process for the students in our classes, then the next thing I will suggest is that teachers must engage meaningfully with *communities* while learning to teach.

"It is extremely challenging to work in a context so diverse as the ones in which you will be teaching. Privileging any one group may mean disadvantaging others. And so, for your first assignment for this class, you will be involved in an immersion of sorts, a collaborative effort between you and the members of your community in order to understand how you can constructively use the intellectual, experiential, and cultural resources of families in the community to promote student learning. This activity is to help you view your professional mission as extending beyond the delivery of mandated services. You need to resist carrying out orders after internalizing the policy ideology and then reinforcing its goals to maintain the social order." Question to the class, just to be sure, "What is an *ideology*? If we say, for example, that we have to be extremely careful as educators because curricula are often linked to something beyond education: *ideology*."

That was a hard question, Meghan thought, as there were many definitions, and the word could be used in many contexts. But she thought she knew what he was getting at in this case.

Woman in a sari on the far right, "Um, any type of meaning-making that supports a form of the dominant power."

"Ok. So you are *agents* yourselves and responsible for breaking the chain of top-down commandeering, you are not bureaucrats that follow orders unquestioningly. Keep this in mind when you head out to do this assignment. Your students are interacting and constructing knowledge in the communities where you will spend your time for this assignment, where you will become investigators and participants.

"For this particular assignment your focus is on the resources available in the community and familiarizing yourselves with where your students are coming from. You will conduct interviews with parents and other community members to find out what information and skills, or funds of knowledge, as they're called, are available to the households and to the schools. You will then, in conjunction with the expertise of community members, organize a lesson plan. Keep your research broad for this assignment, as the next one will build on it and require you to specifically familiarize yourself with the

particular minority cultures existing in our society and thus give you a foundation of knowledge about the students in your classes and their families.” He sipped, then he coughed. “One of the benefits of a community-situated approach to curriculum design is that it advances on a dual track, requiring you to focus on language both as an instrument and as an object of study. You will learn how curriculum is an entity over which you and your students may exert agency and control. You will learn how to use the linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural resources that language minority children bring to school as a basis for planning, with them, their formal education. This can only happen once you are knowledgeable about and comfortable with the larger communities in which these children grow up and live.

“As we have said, public education generally reflects the knowledge and assumptions held by educational authorities about the experiences and backgrounds of children from the *majority* or *dominant* group. Education is still, but less and less, developmentally sensitive to and culturally appropriate for only *these* children. This is why it is necessary for you, as educators, to refocus your attention to also take into account significant background and learning factors particular to the development of minority children. It’s in your hands, my friends, it’s in your hands! Don’t leave it to the authorities because they are not going to change the system without you and your community allies fighting for it. The factors affecting the learning of minority children can vary enormously, considering the diversity of their first languages, their level of English proficiency, their previous educational experiences, their medical conditions, the circumstances of their home life, and so on. As most of these children’s backgrounds are as yet unfamiliar to you, you must *actively* seek to know their backgrounds in order to plan effective instruction for them.”

“How was your day?” Meghan’s roommate Anke asked. Anke was a German exchange student studying in Ontario for a year.

“It was good. We were assigned our first project. It’s a community-referenced learning project and it looks like fun.”

“Do you actually start practice teaching this year?”

“Oh, yes. Pretty soon. The first year, last year, was just getting to know the education system and policy and various philosophies of education. The first year has a big focus on critical pedagogy and critical constructivism. We study a lot of theory. Because you can’t really teach without learning about the power operations at play in the system you are about to enter. So we study a lot of issues in multicultural education and minority language education. And then this year we do placements, and focus on getting to know our students backgrounds. Understanding our biases and what role we play in

these children's lives and how we are affected by the way we ourselves were raised and how that will play out in our teaching. Stuff like that."

Anke leaned against the wall and crossed her arms. "So you don't actually go into the classrooms to teach until second year?"

"Right. Which makes excellent sense cause you can't possibly be trained to teach in such diverse classrooms after only a couple months. It takes a lot of time and effort to get to know the community you are dealing with, not to mention the ministry and policy makers and all those people. We have to know all about them and their role too."

"Yes, that makes sense. And then what do you do in the third year?"

"The third year is for teachers who want to teach in the Language Inclusive Programme schools where the policy is designed to allow minority language students along with Anglophone students to study bilingually. So we study language acquisition and everything related to bilingual education. If a teacher knows very little about how to promote academic skills in a second language, then the students are unlikely to receive the instructional support they need. The LIP schools are really neat. The entire school environment is different, more worldly, more inclusive! Preparing kids to live and work and contribute to the bettering of a global culture, an international culture, no matter where in the world they base themselves later on. We are all citizens of the same world."

"What about language minority groups with only a handful of families in the community, like the Bosnians in London, for example? There are not enough of them to fill a classroom."

"No, there have to be 10 to 12 kids in every grade from one to five for elementary in order for the two-way immersion to be put in place in a particular school. But it goes year by year, so some years the LIP schools will offer a particular language in only one or two grades. Like last year I think there actually was a two-way immersion class for Bosnian at Edwards Public School. For the rest of the language groups, they study in English but have two hours a day in their home language taught by language support staff from the community. So every child no matter what their linguistic background gets instruction in their first language which allows them to further develop this language so that they can become fully proficient bilinguals."

"That's really cool. So in your third year you are learning how to teach to a multilingual classroom?"

"Well, the whole programme teaches you how to teach to a multilingual classroom, but the L2 year, your third year, specifically prepares you to teach in one of the two-way classrooms or else in the English-medium classroom. If you do the English-medium option then you are trained extensively in what they call *cultural awareness*, which you teach to the Anglos when the language minorities are off

with the respective language support staff. Cultural Awareness classes provide education on rights associated with language, and the myths surrounding the views of homogenous standards and language correctness, uh, varieties of language, among other topics of course.

“In this option you have to study the basics of about six languages, each from a different language family. Nothing in depth, of course, but you have to be familiar with different languages so that you can understand the mistakes your kids make in their English acquisition process. Children whose first language is Japanese will make very different errors in English from children who are native Spanish speakers. No matter which option you choose you have to spend half the L2 year in a foreign country. I have a meeting with my academic advisor on Friday to find out more about this.

“Anyways, the most important thing is that we become experts in more than just classroom teaching strategies. We look at policy procedures and existing policies, because, after all, we and our students operate under them! Oh, and for the first semester there’s an introduction to your language of focus, although everyone usually already has a base in the language they choose, and then you do the six months in a country where that is the dominant language. This is so that you learn the language in a similar way to how your future students are learning English. When you come home and are hired by a LIP school, you teach bilingually with support from language coaches.

“In my case, I will have a Russian speaking language coach who I’ll work together with every week to make sure I have an advanced enough vocabulary and stuff for my Russian half of the days. Sometimes the teachers are pretty close to fluent in their focus language even before they start the L2 year. Like my sister’s teacher in Ambury this year. She lived for a long time in I think Bolivia or somewhere and she coaches the other English-Spanish two-way teachers.” Meghan was stirring the soup she had put on the stove.

The next morning Meghan’s father called at 8:00 am to say he was sending a package with a t-shirt and some socks that Meghan had forgotten the last time she was in Ambury. Meghan rolled over and went back to sleep. Her alarm was set for 8:15 and every minute was precious. 9:00 was her meeting with the academic advisor. Five minutes required to actually get out of bed, thirty for breakfast and some reading, five to get ready, and five to get herself to the Education building across the street.

Anke was already up and the smell of her coffee filled the apartment. Meghan helped herself. Then she poured some cereal and perused the front page of the newspaper. Anke glanced at the clock and flew out the door. Suddenly, Meghan realized that she had not written any questions down for the academic advisor, and as she crossed the street it occurred to her that she actually had no particular

question in mind at all. She checked in at the front desk and the receptionist told her to have a seat, Mrs. Schwartz would be with her in a moment. As she sat, Meghan tried to come up with an intelligent question to ask.

"Meghan Kabytov." A blonde lady with square shoulders and too much lipstick sang out to the waiting room, even though there were only two people sitting there at this early hour. Meghan followed her into an office where she was asked to have another seat.

"What can I help you with today?" Mrs. Schwartz clicked around on the computer to open Meghan's file. She had a strange way of tilting her head backwards to look at the screen, as if it were two feet above her.

"Um," Meghan began. "Well I am considering doing the L2 year and I wanted to know a bit more about it."

Mrs. Schwartz stopped clicking and looked at her as if she hadn't heard properly, but then she smiled warmly and said, "You have come to the right person. I used to teach the L2 year intro class. I can tell you all about it." She sat back in her chair and tilted her head upwards to look at Meghan, as if she were two feet above her.

"Well I know how it works, I mean, the basic idea of it, the outline of the year. But I was wondering what type of material is covered and what is the focus and also how does it work for the semester abroad."

"Have you decided what language to do?"

"Russian."

"Do you have a base in Russian?" Meghan nodded.

"Oh, ok. Because if you did Polish or Ukrainian, you would have more flexibility for where you could teach. Russian might be in specific demand in a certain part of the country, but it might not be where you want to settle. Polish and Ukrainian, on the other hand, have two-way programmes at a lot of the LIP schools across the country. But you have a base in Russian?"

Meghan nodded again.

"For the semester abroad it's easy. You pick a country that is native to your language of choice, of course our school has to have an agreement with them, and then you do your six last months of study at the university there, bilingually. This replicates what your students face, and gives you a chance to further develop your language skills. You live with a home-stay family."

"The L2 year is 10 months, right?"

"No, it's 12. You finish your second year in May, and then you start L2 year readings and intro to your language in August. You get back from your semester abroad in August the following year.

“As far as what is taught, well, let’s see. In my classes we looked quite a bit at how authentic language learning does not take place in isolation from other aspects of a child’s development. It is intimately linked with, constrained by and a contributor to cognitive and social development. That is to say, learning *English* is not a subject in itself. Languages exist within a social setting, and cannot be separated from it and studied independently. Just as every content lesson is a language lesson, every language lesson is a content lesson. This is the magic of the LIP classrooms, of course, because language is always learned in a way that is meaningful to the students, and not considered a skill that they either have or they don’t, and cannot proceed until they acquire. That is ridiculous, as languages are living phenomena that change and manifest themselves differently in every living creature. Native speakers of English are constantly improving and refining their language skills just as new learners are, and yet so many school systems are still set up in a way that treats the English language as a gatekeeper to a child’s academic success.” She shook her head. “Uh, what else. We looked at the structure of language and the process of first language learning and second language development. This is key. An entire unit is done on the nature and dynamics of bilingual instructional models and methods, of course, so that teachers can explore techniques they may want to implement in their classrooms. For example, Suggestopedia or the Notional-Functional approach, among others.

“You know how it is, a good bilingual teacher is not simply someone who speaks two languages. This is like saying that an English teacher is simply one who speaks, reads and writes English! Teachers in the LIP schools need to understand the nature of language and acquisition so that they can create appropriate learning environments for second language learners. Making our classrooms authentic spaces for communication in authentic language. No point in having kids fill in blanks on worksheets or in having them write a paragraph with ‘as many of this week’s vocabulary words as possible’. That is not authentic language use. The L2 year trains teachers to promote communication where language is used in meaningful and purposeful ways, and activities are planned with this in mind. Teachers let the students generate their own language by talking with them in the new language like they do with native speakers.

“So if you’re in a two-way Vietnamese class, say, and you’re all looking at a picture of a puppy playing with a ball and one of the English learners points to the picture and says ‘puppy’ then you respond with a normal and meaningful response like you would if it were a native English speaker, such as ‘Yes, you are looking at the little puppy playing with the ball. When I was little I had a puppy who loved to play with a frisbee. Do you have a pet?’ and you would carry on the conversation with all the children, reinforcing vocabulary with images. Then in the Vietnamese part of the day you would go back and talk about puppies in Vietnamese. Seeing as language acquisition, whether it is the first or

second language, is a natural process that takes time, classroom practices that promote authentic language use enhance the kids' language learning.

"And oh there is also an emphasis on learning how to respect the fact that language variation exists as a natural feature of all languages and how a child's language is an essential part of their social and cultural identity. So we train teachers to recognize that academic success does not depend only on proficiency in any given language or variety of a language.

"Of course, a large part of the L2 year studies the historical and political contexts of bilingual education and policy. This way, teachers can advocate for their students' needs in a climate that could still be considered hostile toward newcomers and diversity. "During the L2 year, you learn how to plan and prepare for the appropriate goals, objectives, and activities to meet your students' needs in more than one language. This is of course more complex than planning in one language."

Chapter Twelve

Friday afternoon, and a dark cloud settled in over Lenika's desk. She looked at the grade circled in red ink on her paper. It couldn't be right. She used to be a top student, an A+ student; clearly there had been a mistake. This U did not belong to her. She could feel her face turning hot. She felt like everyone was looking at her, everyone knew. She shrank in her chair. Mrs. Taylor's scribbles made her want to curl up under her desk forever and ever. Lenika quickly hid the paper at the bottom of her knapsack. Maybe it would just be forgotten and would eventually disappear. She glanced around. Frank was hiding his head in his hands. She caught his eye. He had not done well either.

The worst part about it was that Lenika did not remember thinking that the test was difficult. In fact, she had handed it in proudly when she finished, sure she had done better than half the class, as usual. And she had studied too. She thought back to the evening before the test when she had sat with her father at the kitchen table and told him everything she knew about the animal she had chosen: the scorpion. She had researched it on the Internet at the library, as she was supposed to, but really there had been no need, as scorpions were simply a matter of life in her country. Her father listened attentively and then added a couple of interesting facts from his own personal experience with scorpions. Actually, Carlos had rambled on for quite some time about this scorpion and that one. The one his mother couldn't get out of the corner of the kitchen when he was young, the ones that had to be fumigated out of the boss's office back home, the one he almost stepped on because he couldn't see it under the rocks. By the end of the evening, Lenika had felt more than ready to write the test. There

was nothing, she believed, that she didn't know about scorpions. No matter what the teacher asked, she could answer.

The rest of the afternoon seemed to pass in a haze. Lenika tried her best to put the test out of her mind and carry on with Mrs. Taylor's activities as if nothing had happened. But she felt wretched. She wanted to cry, and on a few occasions she felt she might. But she couldn't because if she cried, the whole class would know she had gotten a U. She couldn't let anyone know. They already thought she was strange, and didn't take anything she said seriously. This would only confirm their suspicions. She was stupid, just like they thought.

When the day ended, finally, Lenika burst out the door and ran as fast as she could home. The whole thing was so confusing to her. She usually always got Sobresalientes at home. What was wrong with her? In the confines of her bedroom closet, equipped with a flashlight, Lenika uncrumpled the piece of paper that professed her doom. She followed all the red ink scribbles with her eyes. It appeared as though the parts where there was the most ink were the parts where she had had to answer in full sentences. Almost every single sentence had a different sentence written above or below it. Lenika could hardly make out her own writing anymore.

The tears came. There, on the floor of her closet, the feeling of her own complete inadequacy consumed her. She cried and cried. Each time she looked at the paper she was reminded how dumb she must be. She felt humiliated. How could she ever face Mrs. Taylor again? Every last morsel of self-confidence she had mustered up for attending school in English disappeared down the cracks in the closet floor. She wouldn't go back, she decided. She had to take private, intense English courses for at least a year before she could ever attempt another day at that school. She had to forget Spanish. She had to push it out of her head every time it entered. She would force herself from that day forward to replace her useless Spanish with the language she needed, English. It was only English that was going to get her anywhere in life now.

Lenika thought back to an assignment she had done poorly at school in her home country. It was her first assignment in grade 2. It wasn't an assignment in the traditional grade 2 sense. She did not have to finish it in class before the bell rang, and put it in a pile on Srta. López Mendez' desk, but rather it was to be completed at home and brought back the next day. The topic was safety. Everybody in the class had to choose a safety measure and make a poster about it. Lenika chose looking both ways before crossing the street. She knew exactly what she would draw on her poster to show her safety precaution. It would be a little girl with brown curly hair stepping out onto the street.

In fact, Lenika decided she would use her good markers to make the poster. They had been a Christmas present from her grandmother and grandfather and she had only used them once before. To

make a thank-you card for grandma and grandpa. She liked to save her good markers for *special* occasions. As she walked home from school that hot September afternoon in 2027, Lenika made up her mind that this assignment was a special occasion. She was, after all, in grade 2 now, and this was, after all, her first grade 2 assignment. It had to be good. It was going to be the assignment that would prove to everyone how smart she was.

She knew she was smart because she was the one who all her classmates asked if they didn't know the answer to something. Of course, Juan was the one who *she* always asked if she didn't know the answer to something. So maybe she wasn't the smartest of all, she reasoned, but she was certainly near the top. And so she ran home, determined, energized, ready to make her safety poster.

The evening was long as she sat at the kitchen table and designed the ultimate poster for looking both ways before crossing the street. She began with the border, carefully tracing the edge of her ruler. Then the letters. Her mother helped her with the spacing so that it was evenly written across the top: 'Mira bien antes de cruzar'. After what seemed like ages, it was 8:00 and time to get ready for bed. Dinner came and went without much notice. The poster took up her entire consciousness.

At school, Lenika's cubbyhole was on the far end of the row of 47 grade 2 cubbyholes. The day was hotter than any other that week, and as the building was not equipped with air conditioning, the fans hanging from the ceilings were on and the windows at either end of the hallway were as widely open as possible. The cross-breeze was powerful, and at one particularly hot moment that day when the wind was desperately trying to cool the place down, a sudden gust swept up Lenika's safety poster assignment, wisped it out of the cubbyhole and down the hall onto the ground.

Somebody picked it up later in the day and put it back in Lenika's cubbyhole, but who it was doesn't matter and will never be known. When Lenika went to collect her poster after Srta. López Mendez asked for the class to pile them in one neat pile on her desk, she found a torn, dirty, and smudged mess that was once her finest work. She started to whimper and was at a complete loss as to what to do. It seemed she had no choice but to hand it in the way it was. If she didn't, Srta. López Mendez would think she didn't do the assignment. If she attempted to explain the mystery, she would sound silly and Srta. López Mendez would think she was making excuses. She took a deep breath, and added it to the pile with the rest of her classmates, as if nothing had happened.

Lenika did not get a smiley-face on the safety assignment, and she will never forget the look of disappointment as her teacher handed it back to her. The only comment on the back of the poster was "Needs to be treated with more care. Assignments should not be handed in that are dropped on the ground and stepped on."

Here, years later, in an entirely different country, that same feeling of utter tragedy consumed little Lenika. The difference was that the U, for unsatisfactory, in this new country was not an isolated occurrence. The Us were accumulating on Lenika's grade 5 record. With every project handed back covered in red ink, her heart sank. With every quiz score sitting at the bottom of the class, her confidence diminished. With every wrong answer when she put her hand up, whether it was actually the wrong answer or, more likely, only the wrong words to express the right answer, her determination shrank smaller and smaller.

A knock at the bedroom door. "Lenika? Tienes hambre?" Nothing. "Lenika?" The door opened and Maria peeked her head in. Eyebrows raised, she peered around the room as the smell of garlic from the kitchen seeped in through the open door. A snuffle from the closet. Maria went over and knocked on the closet door.

From within, Lenika's small voice, "Si."

Maria opened the closet door and scooped her daughter up in her arms. Depositing her on the bed, she dried Lenika's eyes and removed her ponytail, which had shifted from the back of her head over to a wilted position above her ear. Nobody said anything for a minute or two. Lenika was still holding the crumpled paper in her hand, and gave it resignedly to her mother. Her mother looked it over, folded it into her pocket, and took Lenika in her arms once again.

"Mira." Maria handed the test to her husband who was seated in his usual chair at the kitchen table the next morning. She had said nothing to Carlos the night before when Lenika had given her the test, but now the kids were gone to the Culture Centre for swimming lessons. She poured herself a cup of coffee and sat down beside him. He looked at it, looked up at Maria, and back at the test again. His eyes went from wide to confused to angry. He had never gazed at a school assignment by his daughter that was not covered in checkmarks and happy faces. All the red ink surrounding Lenika's writing made him uneasy.

"Maria, what do we do about this?"

"Maybe we should go and speak with Mrs. Taylor. Clearly something is not right. Perhaps Lenika misunderstood the assignment."

"I will call for an appointment."

Monday afternoon, Carlos left work early to meet Maria at Honey Elementary for their appointment with Mrs. Taylor. He was angry. He wanted the teacher to know how strong a student Lenika was back home, and how she had talked the subject over with him the night before and seemed

well prepared to write about it. He was curious what she thought of his daughter. Did she write all over everybody's papers with red ink, or was Lenika actually not performing adequately? He had practiced his speech in English in his head on the way over, in the most Canadian sounding voice he could mimic.

Maria was waiting in the parking lot. When he looked at her, he could see that she too was anxious to let Mrs. Taylor know how mistaken she had been, that Lenika was in fact a very bright little girl and an eager student. They checked in at the principal's office, then made their way up to Mrs. Taylor's room. They were feeling strong, confident. They were plainly going to express their disappointment in Mrs. Taylor's poor judgment, and clear up the misunderstanding about their daughter's intelligence. She greeted them kindly when they reached her room, and offered them a seat in front of her desk.

"I would like to thank you for making an appointment to see me. I, too, wanted to speak to you about your daughter." Mrs. Taylor began, but did not stop there. She took a quick breath, avoided eye contact to ensure they did not cut in, and continued right on. "Lenika seems to be a very intelligent girl. I am pleased with her friendly demeanour and good rapport with other students, even Anglophone ones. However, I am concerned about her lack of language ability." Carlos looked stunned. Lenika never shut up at home, he was shocked to hear someone say she lacked language ability. Maria couldn't quite be sure that she had understood clearly. She looked desperately at her husband who confirmed that that was indeed what Mrs. Taylor had said.

"You see, as much as I am sure Lenika is a clever little girl, she is completely unable to express herself. On her test, I could barely make out the words she was trying to put together, let alone grasp any message she wanted to convey. Some of the other foreign students in the class have the same problems, and I am presently arranging for a special needs class to take place once a week for these students.

"I hate to say it, but I fear the problem largely has to do with the fact that Lenika does not think in English. I see her eyes wandering sometimes during class because she is not able to follow like she should. I feel that this disability will be a huge obstacle for her in her future, something that will prevent her from succeeding to her full potential. She simply must stop speaking and thinking in Spanish. This must be a number one priority if she expects to pass this grade. I cannot allow a student to go on to sixth grade who is not able to put together two paragraphs about an animal of her choice. This is a simple and basic request, you understand. And like I say, Lenika was not the only incapable one in the class. There were others who went so far as to draw a picture of the animal instead of writing about it, which is a way of avoiding the task at hand, and completely unacceptable. Your

daughter, luckily, is not that bad, but I'm afraid she is not at the same level as most of her classmates." Mrs. Taylor's eyes were like ice, impenetrable.

Maria could not bear to look at her or hear any more. She sat in her chair and fiddled with the zipper on her purse. She felt confused, sick to her stomach. What hard things to hear about her daughter, she thought, and she knew she was catching only parts of it. So different from what the teachers back home always said about Lenika. She suddenly had a feeling of inadequacy herself. Clearly she had not prepared Lenika sufficiently for a new life in English. Carlos, enraged, did not look away from Mrs. Taylor once. He was trying his best to follow her rant and make sense of the words flying at him like spitfire. How can being literate in Spanish thwart Lenika's ability to learn about animals? She already knew about scorpions, she just had to be helped to express it English. It's not like she was incapable of *learning* or *thinking*. She should not be held back and prevented from learning the subject material while she is acquiring English. This could mean that she does not develop cognitively for years!

The sharp words continued to pierce the air. "And furthermore, I suspect she communicates with some of her friends, and certainly her family, in Spanish. This does nothing but slow her capacity to move over into English. Now, I am sure you are very capable parents, and I strongly feel that if you want to help Lenika integrate into Canadian culture, you need to be encouraging her to speak only English at all times. She needs new English habits. She is in Canada now, and in Canada we speak English and always have. It is what binds our communities together, unites us as a country. Of course there is the issue of Quebec, but that is a different problem. Spanish is holding her back." She stopped to sigh sympathetically.

"I know you are reasonable people and no doubt respect the superior quality of the Canadian education system. That is why I know you will understand the vital necessity of getting Lenika to full and fluent English as quickly as possible." Mrs. Taylor glanced at her watch. She apparently did not have anything else to say, and was not interested in hearing what the Costas thought. The meeting was over as far as she was concerned. Of course, out of common courtesy, Mrs. Taylor asked if Carlos or Maria had any questions. Her inquiry met their blank stares, she smiled, and told them to please come back again anytime they had anything to discuss with her.

Chapter Thirteen

A few weeks later, Julia Covas Marcos was in the dining room with Felipe and Juana, trying to pick all the dough off their fingers after having been kneading bread for the past half an hour on the dining room table. Juana had brought home a recipe for Russian molasses bread and insisted her brother and mother make it with her. They realized part-way through that the recipe yielded four loaves. The youngest son, Martin, was building with wooden blocks on the far end of the table. The doorbell rang. As Roberto was not home from work yet, Julia nodded at little Martin to go answer it, since he was the only one with clean hands. She could see the front door from her stance at the table, and was happy it was Maria Costa's brown hair that appeared behind the door. Maria let herself in, engaged Martin in a conversation about what he was building, and followed him back to the dining room.

"Ah, estan todos!"

"Salvo Roberto," Julia shrugged. She resorted to the dishcloth for her sticky fingers and brought Maria into the kitchen. She put the cafetera on the stove. They spoke in a rapid, informal Spanish that only gossiping women can comprehend.

"Lenika's teacher scolded her today because she filled in a blank on an activity sheet with *mariposa*."

"What! Did she expect her to know that word in English?"

"Well I suppose she expected her to look it up in the dictionary. I looked at Lenika's sentence and it showed a remarkable understanding of English, for a girl just arrived in Canada. It said 'The _____ is the insect with symmetrical wings.' I just don't understand how she can be in trouble for that! A mariposa is a mariposa! She is not saying anything wrong, she *knew* the answer, just needs the word in English, that's all!"

Julia nodded and flung her arms up in exasperation. "Just because the *teacher* doesn't know what a mariposa is, she penalizes Lenika! As if her knowing how to say it in a language other than English somehow bothers Mrs. Taylor. Instead of *teaching* her the word in English, she gets mad! Scandalous!"

Maria reflected a moment. "I find that there is still a lack of acceptance of the mixing of languages at Honey. Ambury as a city is so supportive of multilingualism and multiculturalism, and I'm baffled as to why there can still be a language policy like this in a city where there is such a high level of mixing between linguistically different people. I mean, look at cities like Ottawa and Montreal where the population is greatly bilingual with French and English, on top of so many minority languages. I'm sure code-switching is heard all over the place in the schools."

Julia listened proudly to her friend. She had been trying to tell Maria this since the day the Costas arrived. "Maria, it is in the LIP schools that you find the policy you are looking for. Code switching is encouraged, and that's just the beginning of it! In a transnational and global world where immigration is such a central component of society, people are constantly moving back and forth between languages in different contexts. And yet, despite this obvious reality, code switching still has not been granted recognition or legitimacy as a variety of language in some places. Some people still feel that we immigrants are expected to conform to dominant language form. Just look at a school like Honey! The teachers, along with their teaching materials and tests, are still striving for some kind of purity of language, as if that even *means* anything. Who is to say which language varieties are pure? The ways that bilingual children communicate are still not considered acceptable in their educational context. I mean, it takes students between seven and eleven years to acquire the academic language abilities required for studies in school. Compared to the kids who are born and raised with the dominant language! It seems pretty evident and normal to me that those who were not born and raised in English will be using their home languages and English in mixed forms."

"Si, and I read an article that talked about the growing evidence that kids like ours who operate in two languages actually have shown an advantage in production, comprehension, and a whole bunch of academic and cognitive tasks at school."

Roberto walked in carrying five bags of groceries and swung the door shut with his foot. He put them down on the counter and kissed his wife. "More miseries from Honey? Why don't you send your kids to Tove, Maria... we've been through this!" Maria pursed her lips. Roberto went in to see what the little ones were up to.

"Mira, papá! Hicimos pan!" Juana exclaimed from the dining room.

Chapter Fourteen

There was one girl in Lenika's class at Honey Elementary to whom Lenika had not talked much. Her name was Mercedes and in the middle of October, she was put in the same group as Lenika for their science project on bugs. The girls worked well together, and Lenika found it especially easy to communicate with her new friend because she spoke in an English that was, for some reason, much easier to understand than anyone else's. Lenika was also less reserved about her own English when she spoke with Mercedes. It was as if the two of them spoke a mutual language that was neither English nor their first languages. They were both relaxed around each other and thus became instant friends.

And so it was that one Friday Mercedes invited Lenika to go to her house on the weekend to finish the bug project. Lenika was overjoyed at this suggestion because she had never been invited to a classmate's house, and had felt left out on more than one occasion when she could hear the girls around her planning all the fun things they were going to do together at their sleep-overs. Even though she knew the proposition was purely business oriented, Lenika felt a rush of glee fill her up when Mercedes asked if she could come over tomorrow. The entire rest of the day Lenika was extra nice to Mercedes. She didn't want her to change her mind. She offered her the eraser on the back of her pencil during math, and even the granola bar from her lunch. By the end of the day, Mercedes had not changed her mind, and told Lenika that she would phone her that night.

Lenika rushed home and burst through the door with the same enormous smile plastered on her face that had been there all day. Carlos couldn't help but realize that he hadn't seen that smile in a long time. Every time the phone rang that evening, Lenika insisted she answer. First, it wasn't Mercedes. Then, it wasn't Mercedes. But then, finally, it was. The girls lived quite close to each other, they discovered, and Lenika was to walk over around 11:00 tomorrow morning.

The next day when Lenika stepped inside the front door of her new friend's house, she was surprised to hear Mercedes' mother speaking on the phone in Spanish. At first she thought nothing of it; after all, she heard her own mother speaking Spanish on the phone all the time. But then it dawned on her that all this time she had not known that Mercedes was from a Spanish background. When she looked around the house, she felt comfortable.

"Hello," Mercedes said as she opened the door

Lenika hesitated. "Hello," she said at last.

"Do you want to go to my room?" Mercedes asked. Lenika agreed, but followed her slowly, as she was looking around at the Latin American artwork, and trying to identify from Mercedes' mother's accent where they were from. When Mercedes realized that her friend had noticed, she tried to distract her and hurried her upstairs. At that moment, Mercedes' mother hung up the phone and came over to the girls.

"Oh, this must be your friend Lenika," she said to her daughter in Spanish. Lenika's face turned instantly to a smile. Mercedes looked horribly embarrassed and said nastily, "Talk English, mamá."

"Pero hablo español!" Lenika protested, ecstatic to have found a new Spanish-speaking friend, but baffled as to why Mercedes did not want her mother to speak Spanish. She also could not understand why all this time Mercedes had only spoken English to her at school when she knew it was

difficult for Lenika and that she was so alone most of the time. There was a pause, then Mercedes told Lenika to come-on. They went upstairs to her room.

Chapter Fifteen

Towards the end of October, about three months after the Costas had left their life in their country to start a new life in Canada, Lenika had become a person they no longer recognized. She was quiet these days. So quiet that Maria and Carlos began to worry something more serious was bothering her that she was not telling them. They tried repeatedly to talk to her and ask her what was wrong. The response was always the same. She hated school, she hated Ambury. But why, my angel? Maria would ask. Because she didn't understand anything. Because the other children ignored her. Because she was stupid.

"Pero, Lenika, you know you are not stupid. You are very, very bright," Maria would say.

"Not here," was always the answer.

Maria and Carlos discussed what to do about this deteriorating state of their daughter. It was difficult because they had very little idea of what went on during the school day at Honey. Lenika did not bring much home from school in terms of homework or projects or newsletters or anything, and when she did, it was all in English. There was very little communication between school and parents.

Lenika had become so quiet, hesitant, discouraged. At school she was nearly always alone and sat at the back of the carpet. She did make some friends, of course. But they were not real friends, in the way she understood friendship. She felt like she couldn't trust anyone. She felt like there was an underlying layer of competitiveness amongst her friends that she could not comprehend. Back home, the friends she had were not concerned with who was whose best friend and who wasn't. They were not preoccupied by who *liked* whom, which *boys* you were going to invite to your birthday party. The predefined roles that girls and boys were supposed to play confused her. Why was there such a division? Why when she sat beside Tom at lunch did all the girls later want to know if she *liked* him? Lenika did not quite grasp the apparently large difference between *liking* someone and, well, just liking him.

She did like most of the girls she met at Honey Elementary. She liked them in Canadian terms, anyway, which didn't seem to really mean anything. You pretty well invited everyone in your class to your birthday party, whether or not you really felt a true bond of friendship. Of course, you didn't invite someone if they hadn't invited *you*. True bonds of friendship, Lenika suspected, did not happen often, at least not in the same sense as back home, where your friends were permanent and ran no risk

of vanishing if you did not rank them as number one best friend or number two best friend or number three. Here there always seemed to be a lingering threat of treason. Like at any moment the girl who is your best friend could turn around to announce you have been bumped to second place.

For a city like Ambury, so diverse and so accepting of a growing global culture, with progressive efforts made in so many facets of life and society, Honey Elementary was certainly starting to look and feel very, very out of place to the Costas. The policy and practices there were so unaccommodating to immigrants such as themselves that they wondered if Julia and Roberto Covas Marcos had perhaps not been right this whole time. Perhaps Tove Elementary was where Lenika belonged.

The language barrier was sure to be a cause of frustration no matter where Lenika went to school, but it seemed at Honey this frustration was magnified. Maybe because the barrier itself was magnified, as there was so little effort to make English-learners feel comfortable and intelligent, and *sufficient* as human beings, even though they were not yet proficient in the dominant language.

Carlos and Lenika did their best to decode the information in handouts when they did come from school. But so often the dictionary made things worse instead of better. For example, one day Lenika brought home a pink sheet of paper with the school's crest at the top, and the Sammy's Burgers emblem about halfway down in the middle of the printing. After half an hour of careful crosschecking with the dictionary, Carlos and his daughter understood that next Friday was the day when Sammy's Burgers was going to come and have lunch with them. This, they interpreted, must mean that Sammy, the dinosaur with hamburger ears who was a familiar icon in their home country as well as here, was going to eat lunch with the students at Honey Elementary. They marked the day down on their calendar.

All week the kids were excited for Friday, and Lenika joined in the excitement as much as possible, although she felt a little uneasy, as if she had not quite understood what was going to happen. On Wednesday, Mrs. Taylor told Lenika not to forget her form for Friday's lunch. Lenika nodded in an artificial excitement. Really, she was not sure what her teacher was telling her to do. She knew Sammy was coming that Friday, but why was Mrs. Taylor waving the pink sheet at her as she left for home? She decided not to ask, for fear she had misunderstood the entire affair. She did not want to see her teacher and friends roll their eyes again because they thought she had understood this whole time. She hated having them explain the same thing over and over to her. In fact, more and more she had been pretending to understand so as to avoid this embarrassment.

Felipe told her once that he had missed out on the dive for candy after all the candy fell from a piñata his teacher at Honey had brought in for the class. When everyone flung themselves forward he

was so used to being told to sit properly in his chair that he didn't dare move when the candy went flying.

But worse still, afterwards the teacher looked at him sitting still in his chair and said "Felipe! You are the one Spanish person in the class and you didn't know how to dive for the candy!"

He was hurt that she called him Spanish when he was Mexican, even though his father had warned him that that might happen. His father and Abasi, their friend from Ethiopia, laughed together about this. Abasi was called 'African' all the time, and was equally frustrated.

What hurt Felipe the most was that the piñata was such a big part of his culture and he had had much more exposure to it than any of his classmates and teacher, and yet he was being scolded for not understanding what to do! He actually thought it was entirely ridiculous that they had brought one into the orderly and conservative school classroom when he had only ever seen them used at celebrations and parties. And on top of that, it was in the shape of Mickey Mouse. This seemed very odd to Felipe, who knew that Mickey Mouse had nothing to do with traditional Mexican culture. It was *supposed* to be a seven-pointed star representing the Devil, and you were *supposed* to sing a song when you hit it. You were hitting him to get back the good things that he had stolen. Felipe's mother always made him and his siblings have an original Aztec piñata at their birthdays, and they were filled with water!

Despite the odd feeling he had, when his teacher unwrapped it from its commercial packaging, Felipe's eyes lit up and he wanted to tell everyone about the time at his uncle's birthday party when it rained (the first rain they had had all summer that year) and the paint on the piñata ran all over the white patio behind their house. He kept his mouth shut, though, and nobody asked nor gave him the opportunity to tell.

Lenika went home that night and told her parents that she thought maybe she was supposed to bring the pink paper back to school, but her mother had thrown it out. The next day, Mrs. Taylor asked her again and this time when Lenika shook her head, her teacher simply shrugged and said, "Ok." On Friday, when lunchtime arrived, Lenika waited with the rest of the kids in their classroom for Sammy the dinosaur with hamburger ears to show up. Everybody sat swinging their feet under the table, chattering about how many hamburgers they had ordered and how many boxes of cookies. Peter had ordered three, and Josh, Kate-L. and Kate D. had all claimed dibs on whatever he didn't eat. Lenika felt shy because she had brought her lunch, as usual, and was slowly starting to realize that she was the only one. She hid it in her desk.

Finally, a man in a beige uniform walked in with two big brown paper bags and began calling out the children's names. As he did, they went up and received their order of hamburgers and cookies. He never called Lenika's name. When he was finished, he gave the lunch attendant a quick smile and

was off to the next classroom. Everyone noisily opened up their paper covered burgers and began stuffing them down their throats, talking loudly at the same time. It took a few minutes before anyone noticed that Lenika was not eating. It was Tom who first noticed and asked her with a mouth full of burger why she didn't order any. Lenika shrugged, dignified, and sat there without eating a bite.

Becky came over and sat with her. She talked to her nicely, and Lenika felt comfortable asking her what the pink paper had said. Becky explained that she was supposed to bring it back with the number of hamburgers she wanted written in the little box. Becky took her over to the lunch attendant and he showed her one of the order forms. At the very bottom of the page, there were two boxes and a line. She was supposed to check off her order and her parents were supposed to sign and return the form. Lenika had not even noticed this part when she was trying to translate the letter with her father. Becky shared her last cookies.

And so, Maria and Carlos were feeling increasingly disconnected from the school life their daughter was enduring. They decided to make an appointment to meet with Mr. Hart, the principal at Honey Elementary. Perhaps he had an idea of why Lenika was not adapting and not enjoying her experience.

He wasn't available that week, but said if they came in early on Monday morning, he might be able to see them before the bell rang. This will have to do, the Costas concluded. And so, early Monday morning they got their children ready and the family walked to Honey Elementary. Upon arrival, Lenika took her brother's hand and they bounced off to the playground where a handful of other early arrivals were dangling from the monkey bars. Maria and Carlos walked into the office where Mr. Hart was standing next to the secretary's desk signing some papers. The secretary asked if she could help them, and they said they were here to see the principal. Mr. Hart looked up from his papers.

"Yes, Mr and Mrs Costa," he shook their hands. "Please have a seat in my office across the hall and I will be with you in a moment." They did so. When Mr. Hart arrived, Carlos inquired whether it would be possible to have someone fluent in both Spanish and English present during their meeting. Mr. Hart said flatly that no, at this short notice it was not possible. "But how can I help you this morning?"

Carlos took a deep breath. "We are concerned of Lenika. She seem unhappy. She is very quiet at the house and we are worried she don't enjoy the experience at Honey Elementary."

Mr. Hart m-hmmed. Then, "She is learning English quite well, Mr. Johnson tells me."

"She is a very smart girl, but we feel her teacher don't recognize because Lenika is so quiet."

"No, I don't think you need to worry about that. Mrs. Taylor does recognize that Lenika is quite clever. She is simply concerned that her connection to the Spanish language and way of thinking is prohibiting her from assimilating to Canadian culture."

"What is Canadian culture, Mr. Hart?" an irritated Maria broke in.

"Well, that's a difficult question, Mrs. Costa," an irritated Dan Hart replied. "Canada welcomes people from all over the world to come and make a life in our country. Of course, we need a common language to communicate, and part of the immigration process, you will agree, involves merging to the norms of our society in order that we can be united as a country rather than fragmented. Canadians respect people from other countries, but we have our way of doing things here, and as you know, those who decide to come here to live must accept that as their way of doing things too." A long silence.

"Of course," said Carlos, finally. Then added, "So why do you suppose our daughter is unhappy?"

Ms. Simpson had just entered the building to put signs up announcing the latest information meeting she and Mr. Wallace were having the following week regarding the Language Inclusive Programme policy. She waved to the secretary, who was the same secretary who worked there when she taught at Honey a few years ago. As she rummaged in her bag for a thumbtack for the bulletin board, she heard Mr. Hart's voice coming from the semi-open door of his office.

"When she learns better English, she will be able to better participate in the classroom activities, and her confidence will increase. Don't worry, she is simply still adjusting." Ms. Simpson stopped what she was doing and strained her ears to hear more. "Thank you very much for coming to see me, and I wish you the best of luck with your daughter. I'm sure things will be fine." He stood up and motioned them towards the door. Ms. Simpson quickly began wrestling with the papers, desperately trying to look natural. She was tacking up a poster when the Costas emerged from Mr. Hart's office. She smiled at them, then frowned at Hart.

"Morning, Cheryl," he said, and walked past her. She stuffed her posters in her bag and ran out after the couple who had just left the building. Her blonde hair was pinned back with a million bobby pins and in her fluster to cover her eavesdropping, wisps of hair had begun escaping and were now blowing all over the place as she approached Maria and Carlos.

"Hi! Ustedes hablan español? Me llamo Cheryl Simpson." The Costas nodded, surprised, and shook her hand. She continued in perfect Spanish, "I couldn't help but overhear that you have a daughter who attends this school?"

"Si."

"And she is not having an enjoyable experience?"

“No.”

“Do you have a minute to discuss it with me? I am a grade 5 teacher at Tove Elementary. I teach the two-way immersion Spanish class. I have done much research in the field of second language learning, and I may be able to help you better understand your daughter’s situation.” Maria and Carlos looked at each other, mumbled something back and forth under their breath, and then decided to invite the woman for a coffee across the street. She accepted.

Maria and Carlos Costa and Cheryl Simpson sat down in a booth and three coffee mugs arrived immediately. The boy serving them rattled off monotonously what the specials were and would they like a soup or salad to start. No, nothing to eat, thank you. The three of them chit chatted for a moment and then Ms.Simpson inquired as to what it was that had concerned them about Lenika. They explained her demeanour, her silent moping around the house, her unwillingness to discuss anything with them, her reluctance to go to school nearly every single morning. Had she made friends, Ms.Simpson asked.

“Yes, a couple. She has been invited to a sleepover or two, even. But she is not the same person with these girls as she had been with her friends back in our country. She is not herself. It is as if she feels she has to change if she wants to be friends with them. Like they will not accept her unless she changes. She has lately been repelling anything at all related to our home culture, even language. She smirks, abashed, when we speak Spanish to her in front of her friends. She wants so badly to be accepted, and for some reason believes that this can only happen if she conforms to what the girls in her class want her to be.

Ms.Simpson nodded. “Yes, I can understand why Lenika feels that way. It is actually quite common among new arrivals to Canada. You see, what happens in an English-medium school is that students who arrive who speak languages other than English are sometimes made to feel deficient in their language abilities. Often this is not done intentionally, most teachers have their students’ best interests in mind, of course, but it is a consequence of poor language planning and policy that often results in students from other linguistic backgrounds feeling inadequate. The focus is on what the student is *not* able to do, instead of what she is able to do.

“Lenika has a language skill that many of the others in the class do not. She is literate in a language other than English and is now adding English to her linguistic repertoire. This is an enormous accomplishment! And the cognitive benefits to being bilingual are very well documented. In a classroom and school setting that is monolingual, the message that is given to students is that *that* language is the norm, and therefore, the best. Of course, the language that is decided as the norm is that which those in power speak. I interpret this to mean that so long as our government is

predominantly made up of monolingual Anglophones (although yes they do have to learn French), all the speakers of other languages are disadvantaged.

"But my point is simply that a school that is run entirely in one language, when there are children who do not speak that language at home, and in many parts of the country, pretty well any big city, the school populations are very, very linguistically diverse, then that school sends the message to those students that the linguistic knowledge they bring to the classroom is not valuable. I'm sure Lenika is a very good reader in Spanish, isn't she?"

"Very good."

"And yet, that is not valued in her classroom. That is a skill that goes invisible, as if she doesn't have it at all. And what's worse, since she is now beginning to acquire skills in a second language, skills many of her teachers do not have themselves, she is made to feel deficient, lacking in literacy ability, less capable than her classmates, when in fact, like I say, she is adding a skill to her linguistic repertoire.

"And so you can see why it is that she might feel the way she does. She does not have the confidence that the other native Anglophone students do because her skills are perhaps not being recognized. She is not being treated like a highly literate, potentially bi-literate, little girl, but rather like an illiterate one. This would silence any of us into submission, would it not?"

Maria and Carlos nodded. They were enraged that this could be how Lenika was being treated. They were enraged that all the years she had spent learning to read and write in Spanish were being ignored and taken as non-existent. And her classmates were not being taught that she had the same skills they did, only in a different language. Literacy can come in any language! Being literate does not only mean being literate in *English*! It was becoming clearer to them.

Ms. Simpson went on, "When a programme such as the one at Honey Elementary does not allow for multiple intelligences to blossom, when the knowledge and skills the students bring to the classroom are not seen as a resource, but rather as a drawback, or even a threat, then those students will suffer, and really, everyone suffers. We all become deprived of information and knowledge that is available at our fingertips but that is being ignored. The language policy, not to mention the curriculum and the entire school culture, is set up to cater to one type of person. That is, the members of the dominant mould. This is becoming more and more problematic in this country because more and more of our population does not fit that mould. As you can imagine, when day after day you spend six hours a day in an environment that views everything you know and all the language skills you possess as wrong and even harmful, you would begin to internalize a sense of inadequacy. Your self-

confidence would plummet, as I suspect has happened to Lenika's, and you would become very hesitant to speak indeed. The spark that flourishes in supportive, multicultural environments is stifled.

"Again, a monolingual, monocultural set-up like the one still in place at too many Canadian schools focuses on what abilities and knowledge the child does *not* have, instead of what she *does* have."

Maria looked so sad. She was holding her husband's hand under the table, and he kept squeezing it in consolation. She felt so bad for her daughter, but more angry with herself for not having known that this could be the case. She asked, "What can we do about this? Mr. Hart said that until she learns English she will not be able to participate in the classroom activities. But we barely speak English, and we would not be much help to Lenika if we spoke only English to her. Our communication would be so drastically reduced around the household."

Ms. Simpson sighed an aggressive, exasperated sigh. She lowered her voice and leaned in towards the Costas across the table, "Dan Hart doesn't know the first thing about what it is to be a second language student, or anything at all about language acquisition or rights. He lives in a close-minded world where everyone needs to be like him if they want to succeed. What he forgets, and this is *extremely* important, is that it is fully possible to learn the ways of the dominant culture, learn the dominant language, and at the *same time*, retain and further knowledge of the home language and culture. I know you already know this, because you are living it. But monolingual people sometimes find this difficult to grasp. They sometimes think that if you live in Canada you should be a monolingual Anglophone like them, or worse, that it is only possible or desirable to be so.

"But anyone who has been exposed to other languages and cultures knows that it is entirely possible and enriching to be bilingual or multilingual and familiar with various ways of life and knowledge. It is quite a common misconception among monolingual people that in order to learn a new language, one must forget any other language. Like you can't learn and exist in more than one language at the same time! Most of the world's population is bilingual. It is just a small percentage (including many Anglos!) who are monolingual. I suspect that Mr. Hart does not realize how beneficial it could be to his school and to our country if we promoted and encouraged multilingualism in everyone.

"I mean, imagine a country that had qualified individuals who could negotiate with international business clients, even more so than we can now (which is more than we could even 25 years ago). Our economy is intertwined with other countries' economies to the extent that without a strong multilingual work force, our shared relationships in areas like foreign trade, international banking, tourism and all that, will be jeopardized. If Hart cares about money, well, on a larger scale he should realise that if our

schools are not supporting bilingualism but our international competitors in business and services *are*, well, it's our economy that loses out."

The Costas listened and digested what this passionate woman was saying across the table from them. They could now see clearly why Julia and Roberto Covas Marcos wanted Felipe to remain in her class. They were delighted when they learned Ms.Simpson was teaching grade 5 this year, because Felipe was now in grade 5. Maria sat clutching her coffee mug with two hands and every now and then shook her head in frustration.

Finally she asked slowly, "How is it different at Tove Elementary?"

This question excited Ms.Simpson and she didn't hide it. "Oh! Well, actually we are having an information session about the Language Inclusive Programme at Tove, which is the term we use to describe the language policy in place at the school. You might be interested to come next Wednesday evening. A colleague of mine and I are going to discuss the policy and answer any questions you and other parents may have. It is at 7:00 at the school." She smiled hopefully at them and they agreed to go.

Chapter Sixteen

That evening Ms.Simpson sat wrapped up in a blanket on the sofa with her cat, reading her recently arrived November issue of the International Journal of Applied Linguistics. The phone rang. She considered letting it ring, as answering it would involve moving the sleeping fur ball on her lap, and unravelling from the bundle she had made herself in the blanket. But, after a few rings, she gave in. She lifted the warm floppy furry cat and placed it back down on the blanket after she had gotten up. Shuffle shuffle from her slippers. "Hello?"

"Cheryl, Ted."

"Hi, what's goin' on."

"Just checking about power point for Wednesday. Adila said we were in room 24 but then I heard the auditorium and didn't know if we could do power point there and also isn't it too big?"

"Adila told me 24. We *can* do power point in the auditorium, but it is too big I think. Is that where she wants us now?"

"Dunno. I'll ask tomorrow but ok that's good we can still use power point if we end up in the auditorium."

"Yes, for sure."

"Ok, great so ashita, ne."

"Matta ashita." Ms. Simpson hung up. She sat for a moment at the kitchen table. Something was bothering her. She picked up the phone and dialed.

"Ted, Cheryl. Sorry. You busy?"

"No, what's up?"

"Well, today I was at Honey putting up the posters and there was a couple in Hart's office. They just moved to Canada in August from... actually, I never found out where from. A Spanish speaking country, anyways. Their daughter, Lenika, goes to Honey and she's not having a very good experience. So I went for coffee with the couple, uh, Maria and Carlos, and I haven't been able to get something she said out of my head. She said that she knew her children must learn English to be fully involved in Canadian society, and she felt that it was their right to maintain their first language, if they wanted to, but that the school didn't seem to be encouraging that at all. When she said this, it struck me that she was experiencing language being viewed as a problem, a right and a resource all at once! I didn't say anything about it at the time, but I wish I had. What stopped me, I realize now, is that I don't really clearly see the distinction between using a language as a resource and using it because it is a right. I thought you would be a good person to ask."

Mr. Wallace thought about this a moment. "Well, it's a difficult one. I believe a combination of the two have to be recognized in any good language policy. Really, a combination of all three, because an understanding of why people view multiple language use as a problem is crucial to understanding how to educate them.

"Language is a right because by forcing language minority students in, for example Ontario, to become monolingual in only the dominant language, they are robbed of the freedom to counteract hegemony, which is the big institutions' attempt at controlling people by winning their own consent. If languages disappear as quickly as they are predicted to do, something like only 10% of the world's languages will be around in 2100, then the facility dominant groups have to control minorities via colonisation of the mind will be magnified.

"At the same time, being bilingual in the dominant language and another language, for example English and Spanish, is so important because knowing the dominant language is necessary in order to understand and critically reflect upon the messages given by these hegemonic forces, government, media, big corporations, etc. To deconstruct the messages, one needs to know the language of those messages well. So that is one reason why learning English is a right.

"But, it is a right to maintain one's first language because those are the languages that are essential for building up the knowledge and reflection base needed for counterhegemonies. Meaning, when we can think and discuss in languages *other* than English, then all the alternative ideas and

ideologies embodied in a variety of cultures are able to be cultivated as counterweights to hegemonic ideologies.

“Governments can control *who* learns English, *which* English they learn, *what* they do with their English skills, and *what* information they have access to or not. You know the famous saying, ‘A language is a dialect with an army and a navy,’ meaning that the reason why rulers insist on everyone learning the dominant language is so that the rulers can decide on the official messages everyone receives, because they control the media. You know, Cheryl, it’s the same thing that we are always complaining about!” They both laughed. Ms.Simpson knew what he was going to say. “When we read the newspaper and we are *sure* there is another side to the story, but they are not giving it to us. We have to go on-line or to alternative sources to find the info that is missing. It is just so frustrating when I read the newspaper and am consciously aware how I am being manipulated at that very moment! I see everyone on the metro in Toronto reading the same newspaper and all I can think of is how *that* is possibly the only information they are receiving about whatever the issue is, and whoever is in charge of that newspaper has absolute control over what they learn about it. Just look at an election campaign! What we read in the newspaper or hear on the radio or on TV. is such a powerful force in shaping our opinions. Depending on what slant the journalist takes, we can be swayed in any which way. If we read that the majority of Canadians feel a certain way, then that definitely affects how we feel, even if we try not to let it.

“Hegemony necessitates that people accept the status quo without stopping to ask *why* things exist the way they do. It feeds the notion that the way society operates now is the way it has always operated and should continue to operate.”

Ms.Simpson acknowledged that she was following his train of thought, then added, “And when it comes to rights, it can be dangerous too because for example in Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees language rights to the official language minorities, but for groups or in contexts where no legal language rights are warranted with respect to language, we are left with the difficult question of what ethical rights children have to maintain or develop their home languages.

“It becomes a question of ethical obligations. What is the ethical obligation of educators and schools to provide support for home languages? Even though there are still teachers who believe they should be encouraging students to be only using English in their homes, I do believe... that is, I try hard to believe, that they are growing scarcer and scarcer. You yourself said that in Toronto you have been so impressed recently with the changes you’ve seen in classroom language practices. But still, reversing the discriminatory patterns that existed for so long in our system involves challenging

assimilationist attitudes that have been tacitly supported by the social power structure since the beginning.”

“I agree. Issues related to bilingualism and language maintenance rarely even made an appearance in teacher training programmes until recently, for example.”

“Right. But what about the language-as-resource approach?”

“Ok, well, while language-as-right is an important orientation, it is insufficient as a basis for language planning and policy in a context like Canada where we are dealing with very linguistically diverse societies. Hostility and divisiveness are often inherent in both language-as-problem and language-as-right approaches. A language-as-resource attitude views language diversity as a societal resource that should be nurtured for the benefit of *everyone*. But the main reason why such an attitude appeals to me is because it is more inclusive than the other approaches. It highlights the interests of the entire society and not just those of a particular minority group. This breaks down the “us versus them” mentality that so often takes over debates in language issues. A supportive language policy that views language as a resource benefits all of us, all groups in our society.”

“I really do feel like Tove and the other LIP schools have come leaps and bounds in the direction of language-as-resource policies. Should we mention any of this at the info session?”

Mr. Wallace laughed, “Cheryl, we are already running the risk of overwhelming the people who are so used to the traditional English-only schools!”

“You’re right. But this is so important. These are attitudes and approaches to language. I guess we just have to trust that the parents who choose Tove for their children recognize that our policy is founded on the principles of using language as a resource.”

“Mhm.”

“Ok, well, have a good night Ted, and thanks a lot. Hello to Asne from me.”

“Ok. Good night.”

Chapter Seventeen

Once the class was settled and Ms. Simpson had everyone’s full attention, she made an announcement. There was a special visitor coming to Tove and he was going to speak to them in the library on Thursday.

“Quien es? Quien es?”

“Well, it’s somebody who I think you will greatly admire. His name is Donaldo de Diego and he is one of the very first graduates of one of the very first Language Inclusive Programmes in

Vancouver.” The class hummed. “He just graduated from university in Buenos Aires, where he is from, and he has been awarded the International Award for Achievements in Multicultural Education. This is a very prestigious award given out once a year to someone between the ages of 20 and 30 who has accomplished something that significantly furthers democratic practices in multicultural education.” Ms.Simpson looked around at 20 confused faces. She started again.

“Donaldo helped open up the first LIP school in Argentina.” They responded better to this.

Carrie, a small, blue-eyed brunette whose father was Argentinian and mother was French, exclaimed, “They have a LIP school in Argentina? Wow!”

“Yes, now, thanks to the work that Donaldo has done as a student there, the school board in Buenos Aires has decided to follow in Canada’s footsteps and begin a LIP network of schools so that the children there can study in their first languages while learning Spanish at the same time.”

“Donaldo is coming *here*?!” Nathan gasped.

“Yes. Now let’s brainstorm some questions we would like to ask him.”

Felipe sat quietly on the carpet as the rest of the class shouted out the questions they had for Donaldo de Diego. He was thinking about the award. When Ms.Simpson called on him for a contribution to the ideas-web she was making on the board, Felipe looked at her with a spark in his eye and asked her to tell what the award was in Spanish. Ms.Simpson paused, smiled, then explained in Spanish that the award was for someone who really wanted to help others learn, improve education around the world, and make school a better experience for all children. Felipe nodded, the little wheels in his head turning.

That evening, Felipe phoned Lenika and told her everything he had learned about the famous Donaldo de Diego. She listened, fascinated. She didn’t even know such an award existed! She asked him a couple questions, such as could she come to the presentation, and how big was the trophy. He didn’t know the answer to either of these.

She hung up and ran downstairs to her parents who were tidying up from dinner in the kitchen. Angel was playing with his trains in the living room. Lenika hung onto the counter and leaned as far as she could backwards until her father scolded her. She began to pour out the details of Donaldo and the International Award for Achievements in Multicultural Education. Carlos couldn’t restrain himself from saying again, as he had been saying for weeks now, *if only we had a computer we could look it up*. Lenika carried on in her excitement, wide eyed, nattering to her mother as she was putting away the dishes.

“Felipe says Ms.Simpson says he helped to open a LIP school in Argentina and so they are giving him a prize because he is helping people go to school in their first language but they are

studying Spanish too, like at Tove where they study both," she took a breath, "And the prize is very *prejudice* and he graduated from university."

"Prestigious"

"And Felipe says he doesn't know if I can go to the presentation too but he is going to ask his teacher and I am going to ask Mrs. Taylor."

"You cannot leave school to go listen to a presentation, Lenika."

Lenika ran back upstairs to finish her English homework, which was slow-going as usual. She sat back down at her desk, took another look at the worksheet and slouched over it, chin in hand.

The next evening, Lenika came home from school in a grumpy mood. Her teacher had laughed at her when she had asked if she could go to the presentation at Tove, just as her mother had predicted. And no matter how much Lenika begged, neither of her parents would pick her up or write her a note allowing her to go. She spent the rest of the evening in her bedroom, quiet, alone. Then Felipe phoned again. Her mother called to her from the upstairs phone and Lenika dawdled over.

The news was good. That day in school, Ms. Simpson had told Felipe's class that Donaldo de Diego had agreed to speak again in the evening this week so that more could attend. The topic of the talk was going to be 'Why I stand behind the Language Inclusive Programme'. Again, Lenika raced down the stairs to tell her parents. Maria and Carlos agreed they would go to Tove on Thursday evening with Julia and Roberto to listen to the young man.

And so they all walked over after dinner on Thursday. Julia had it in her head that they were taking the van, and before there was any time for discussion on the matter, Angel had climbed in and was beckoning his sister to join him. And so the rest of them piled in and they were off. Juana was watching her two brothers for the evening. She had gone over to hear Donaldo speak for Felipe's class that afternoon, and Martin was more interested in the movie his parents had rented him, although he was tempted to ask if he could go too when he saw that Angel was going. In the end, only the Costa kids went. The presentation was being given in the gymnasium, and so Roberto parked the car in the back parking lot and led them through backdoors and they turned up right in the gym itself. "Felipe was on the basketball team last year," he offered, wittily, as an explanation for his backdoor knowledge.

The place was crowded and the overbearing, incomprehensible hum that is born of a gymnasium full of excited people hovered over their heads as they motioned to each other where they were going. Finally everybody was seated and the principal, Mrs. Gul-Chehra, had taken a stance on the platform at the front.

“Part of the philosophy behind the Language Inclusive Programme schools is that this is a country where people from all over the world have mixed, mingled and married, producing a population rich with diversity. Such a multicultural society has the potential to breed fear and intolerance, as much of our history shows. But, it also has the potential to breed understanding, sharing, learning, and acceptance. The LIP policy aims to contribute to a Canada founded on these latter principles. It has only been, many of you know, for the past twenty or so years that Canada has taken on its role as world leader in multicultural education. In the beginning of the 21st century, even, it was still up in the air as to how to educate a diverse population such as ours. And, as the young man who is here today to speak to us will describe, the LIP has been a significant factor in Canada’s internationally renowned language policy in education.

And so without any further ado, I am very honoured to present to you this evening Mr. Donaldo de Diego, the 2030 International Award for Achievements in Multicultural Education recipient, and graduate of the very first Vancouver LIP high school back in 2024.” She started clapping and backing off stage to the left as a rather chubby and strikingly handsome Argentinian man wearing glasses stepped onto the platform from the right. He smiled and looked around and everything was quiet. He began in Spanish.

“I would first like to thank you all for being here tonight to celebrate with me the success that the language policy of the LIP schools has had for the children of my generation and the children of your generation.” He looked at the row of little kids who were sitting or squatting on the floor of the gymnasium in front of the adults in chairs. He pulled a folded piece of paper from his back pocket and switched into English. “One third of Canada’s population is now made up of people born outside of Canada. A significant part of Canada’s population is of non-European descent, and about 40% of Canadian citizens are not native English or French speakers. This is outstanding! I am so proud of us because we are a country that has come far along the path to breaking down boundaries such as nationality and borders, and recognizing that we are all citizens of the world. One world, the same world.

“Most importantly of all, here in Canada we have *found a way* to educate such an ethnically diverse population so as not to deplete the linguistic and cultural resources that come with it. The LIP schools are part of a greater solution to democratic education that serves a multicultural population fully and fairly. Canada is one of the few countries around the world that can boast about the diversity statistics I named. And we are certainly one of the few who can say that we have found a way to offer bilingual education in schools that serve people of sometimes over 40 different minority language

groups. It is our children who will go out into the world multilingual, open-minded, culturally aware, and equipped with multiple perspectives and skills to work with people from absolutely anywhere.”

Behind Donaldo there was a large screen that pulled down from the ceiling of the gymnasium and on it appeared sporadically what he was saying, translated into a dozen or so languages. The simultaneous translators were sitting off to the side of the platform with earphones in and tiny laptops on the table in front of them. What they typed went up onto the screen.

After this particularly inspiring introduction, Donaldo proceeded to describe what the work he had done during his university studies actually entailed, and what events led up to his being given the International Award for Achievements in Multicultural Education. Maria listened and read carefully what he was saying, but her mind wandered because she was thinking of Lenika. The thing was, she could see so much of Lenika in this man. Donaldo was now internationally recognized because he helped introduce Canada’s Language Inclusive Programme to the education system in Argentina, and it was funny how he seemed to have so much in common with Lenika. Both were of Hispanic origin, immigrants to Canada at a young age, bilingual (or at least, in Lenika’s case, on her way to being bilingual), both charismatic and passionate, with many of the same interests, and yet, something was not right.

As much as Maria could see her daughter one day in the same position as Donaldo was that very evening, something was telling her deep down that there was a grave difference between the two of them. She could see her in him, she really could, and she wanted everything for Lenika as surely his parents wanted for him. She could see her daughter accomplishing what Donaldo had. She *wanted* her to take what she was given in Canada and go back to help the people of their country, just like he had. She *wanted* her to contribute to the quality of education of children around the world, to multicultural education, just like he had. And yet, something was not right. She felt like there was a missing puzzle piece. As much as she knew her daughter was capable like Donaldo, with the brains and the drive and the love, it almost felt... like...

“I think we should send Lenika to the LIP school.” Carlos was whispering in her ear. Maria was startled. She looked at him and didn’t take her eyes away for a very long time. *That* was it. *That* was the piece that didn’t fit. It suddenly dawned on her like a ray of light that Lenika was not being taught the skills she needed in language, in critical thinking, in all the essentials of being an active and flexible participant in a multicultural society, in a globalized world... at *Honey*. It hit her like an avalanche. A whole whirlwind of feelings started swelling up inside her. She at once felt angry and sad and frustrated and relieved and thankful and aware. Most of all aware. Suddenly she laughed out loud. Her mind felt like it had been cleared of a thick black cloud of smog that had settled in so long

ago. Smog that had not let her see what Julia Covas Marcos had been telling her all along. Smog that had made her believe and act upon *assumptions* she had held as true ever since she got to Canada. *English immersion, more ESL, don't talk Spanish, go study your English, you and Elisa should be talking in English, English, English.*

She looked around her, suddenly conscious of where she was. *This* was where Lenika belonged. She thought of Honey Elementary, of Mrs. Taylor, of Mr. Johnson, of Mr. Hart. The thought brought a shudder to her shoulders. Carlos looked down at her and then reached over and took her hand. He could feel what she was thinking, and the sheepish smile he gave her when she looked at him told Maria that her husband needed no further convincing either. They both laughed noiseless laughs. Carlos shook his head and said *increible* twice under his breath. Then Angel pulled on his sleeve and said he had to go to the bathroom.

Chapter Eighteen

Querida Lenika,

Muchisimas gracias por tu carta! I understand how you are feeling, darling, but don't get discouraged. In time, you will make friends, even if it takes a little while. Becky sounds nice, tell me more about her. When I moved to Canada, it took me almost a year before I really felt comfortable with anyone in my class. Even now I am self-conscious when someone doesn't understand something I say. I remember when I was in grade 1, I had just moved to Canada a year before and my English was not very good yet. When I started school, it was all in English, like you. My teacher was very nice and patient with me, and she honestly wanted me to succeed; but to her, I was so far behind the other students who could understand everything she was saying, it was almost useless to try and include me in the lesson.

I had ESL classes often, which took me even further away from the class lessons I was supposed to be following. And Lenika! The ESL classes I had to endure! I am sure yours are not this bad now, surely they have improved their methods! I had to sit there and recite vocabulary over and over. By the end of the day my brain was so numb, and I still couldn't put a sentence together the way the teacher wanted me to. I could, of course, converse with my friends, eventually. I learned this on the playground and at birthday parties. But during the ESL class, when she wanted me to tell her in which tense a sentence was written, I never knew. Not only that, but I learned to hate the English language, Lenika. I hated it more than anything. I didn't want to go to ESL. Even though my English was improving, my grades in ESL were not.

I was only little, of course, not big like you. But I learned a way to get through. I learned how to memorize. I became an expert memorizer, and it saved me as far as my report card went. But it did not help me learn to communicate in English. I went home every night and instead of being able to play with my friends or take swimming lessons or piano lessons or read with mamá and papá, I had to spend hours on homework exercises. I had to memorize the correct way to order a pizza and such things, and what's worse, I became almost afraid of my ESL teacher. She was the sweetest old woman, in retrospect, but she was kind of like my drill officer for almost two years. I learned to do exactly what she asked, and narrate what she wanted when she wanted it.

I just wished every night that the next day we would do something fun in ESL class. Like maybe we would watch a programme on T.V. like my friends did at home, or maybe we would read a Robert Munsch book together. Do you know that author, Lenika? I will send you some of my old books to read, if you like. I wished very hard that once, just once, we could play a game or do some drama or anything! Of course at the time I thought nothing of the news, but when I look back now I realize that it

would have been a good idea for us to have learned in 'ESL class about what was going on in the community or in Canada or even around the world! We were young, it's true, but I remember when the fire happened in the corner store and the police thought that it had been set by some kids who went to my school, and we saw police officers around the hallways for a couple days. My classroom teacher talked to us about it, but in 'ESL we just carried on with our boring old drill and grill exercises and I never learned the proper vocabulary to discuss this issue with Anglophone friends. Think! Had my 'ESL teacher known to take that opportunity to connect what was happening in our real lives with what we were learning in class, it would have been so much more interesting and relevant to go to 'ESL class. And not only that, but it would have tied together what we were learning about in our regular classes.

I wished every night that one day my 'ESL teacher would ask me and my 'ESL friends about something we knew. We knew about traditions and cultures that she did not know. But even during Semana Santa or Hina Matsuri or Basant, she never asked us to talk about those parts of our different heritages. It was as if all that didn't matter. What mattered was that we learned what went on here and how to behave here. And so we were left with no way to acquire the language skills needed to talk about our histories and cultures in 'English. We were only able to talk about mainstream Ontario culture. And that's all we learned about, no matter where we were from.

But goodness! Listen to me ramble on! What I wanted to tell you about all of this was that eventually, when I was in grade 2, it was the very end of the year, I remember, my 'ESL teacher told me that I was no longer going to be needing 'ESL classes. I was not going to be in the 'ESL class the next year, wasn't I happy?! I rushed home to tell my mom and dad. I was so good that I didn't have to go to 'ESL anymore! Of course, now when I look back on it, and on how much I struggled the next year, I realize

how poorly made a decision it was to withdraw me. Since then, Lenika, I have researched the phenomenon and I will share it with you because it could certainly affect you too.

According to many researchers, there are two levels of language proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). It is really important to understand the distinction between these two proficiencies, Lenika darling, for one reason just so that you don't get discouraged if you have a hard time following at school even a couple years down the road. It might just be that at school you are required to use CALP and that takes longer to acquire than BICS. I'll explain.

When educators or policy makers hold misconceptions about the nature of language proficiency, these misconceptions can contribute directly to the academic failure of bilingual students. The assumption that conversational fluency in English is a good indicator of 'English proficiency' has meant that a lot of kids like you and me are diagnosed as learning disabled. I will explain it as best I can. If you think about it, communication can be described on a continuum from context-embedded to context-reduced. Context-embedded communication takes place with the help of environmental clues. New families like ours here in Canada, for example, need clues from the context or surroundings in order to communicate. When you go shopping or to a restaurant to eat and you do not understand the language around you, you manage to communicate with salespeople or servers by using gestures and intonation. This communication is aided by everyone sharing the same idea of the purpose of the interaction. BICS are the language skills required for this context-embedded, face-to-face, every day communication. In other words, BICS are the language skills we need to interact with each other on a daily basis, usually oral, informal, and unplanned.

It takes immigrants about two years to acquire peer-appropriate conversational fluency in English. We have all sorts of non-verbal cues, as well as verbal ones, to help us converse. If you think about the English you have learned up to now, Lenika, you have learned a lot of it from your friends and communicating outside of school, right? And don't you find that it is so helpful when you are speaking face to face with someone and you can read their body language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice?

However, when you are in school a lot of the time you are studying things that are removed from context. Lessons like democracy and photosynthesis and even the weather are difficult if not impossible to learn without context clues. They are abstract concepts. And plus, when we learn in school, we use much more formal, written and planned language. This requires a level of academic or cognitive language skills that take longer to acquire than basic communication skills. Like I say, kids can acquire native-like BICS in about two years, but it takes much longer to catch up academically. Between five and ten years! This is context-reduced language, meaning language like printed text or a teacher's lecture that is supported by nothing but linguistic clues. It is thus more cognitively demanding.

What happened with me was that I had developed BICS in English after only a short time in Canada, and as I mentioned, at the end of my second year they took me out of the ESL classes and I had to learn everything in English with everyone else. They thought that since I had learned enough to hold a fluent conversation, and I was interacting and mingling well with my Anglophone friends, that I could handle a regular English-medium class. Well, they were wrong. My CALP was not advanced enough in English and although I could talk with the teacher and my classmates, I struggled with the work and assignments I had to do for the rest of my elementary school years. Unlike when speaking with friends, doing projects and listening to lessons required me to be

proficient in English without context clues. I was not there yet. The reading was always difficult and I always had to have everything explained to me over again by a friend. It takes years and years, Lenika dear, to become proficient in a new language, so do not despair! You will achieve English, I know you will, in all its levels. I hope you will keep this continuum of language skills in mind as you journey towards English proficiency. We can talk about this more later, if you like.

For now, I look forward to hearing from you and let your father know that my father is waiting to hear about the car and when he does he will be in touch. It looks like we will be able to see each other before long!

Besos,

Elisa

When Lenika finished reading the letter from Elisa, she couldn't understand why she didn't feel encouraged or relieved by her cousin's words. Normally, Elisa was the person who kept her going when she was sure she was never again going to be as happy as she was back home. Elisa represented a success story. She was, in many ways, Lenika, just 10 years down the road. She looked up to Elisa like no one else. She knew that if Elisa was capable of making it through this same experience, then so could she. But for some reason this letter made Lenika feel even worse than before.

She put it down and started to cry. Her wet cheeks glimmered under her bedroom light, and little pieces of dark brown hair that had escaped from her ponytail clung to her face. She sniffled, then wrapped herself in the blanket she had brought from home. The one la abuela had made for her when she was a baby. She didn't remember receiving it as a gift, but her mother told her that after she got it, she wasn't able to fall asleep without it. Now she used it to dry her eyes. She pondered a moment what would happen if she used up all her tears. After all, she had been crying so much since she arrived in Canada. This thought actually stopped the tears for a moment, and just then her mother came in to see how she was doing. "What did Elisa say?" Maria asked.

Lenika began to whimper, and Maria took a tissue from her pocket to wipe her daughter's nose. "She said I will be fine." Lenika crawled onto her mother's lap.

Chapter Nineteen

Wednesday evening, it was arranged that Lenika and Angel would stay with the Covas Marcos' while Maria and Carlos went to the information session at Tove Elementary. Although the Costas were already convinced they were going to like Tove and the LIP, they wanted to learn more about it. How exactly did it work? They dropped off the kids across the street at 6:30 and turned down Mulberry towards the bridge that crossed the river to Tove. At the front doors, there were volunteers wearing cards around their necks with their name and what languages they spoke written in block letters. One of them directed them to room 24: por aqui, recto hasta la escalera, segundo piso, primera puerta a la izquierda.

Maria and Carlos took a step inside and stood for a moment in awe. The foyer in which they found themselves was octagonal in shape with two columns standing in front of them on either side of the enormous doors leading to the auditorium. Set into part of the walls on either side of columns, about three feet up off the ground, and curving all the way around the octagon until the wall ended to make way for the hallway on their left and on their right, was a beautiful aquarium. The lights in the water shone blue and red hues out of the glass and into the foyer. There were plants and rocks and shipwrecks and even a miniature scuba diver swimming amongst the hundreds of fish who called Tove Elementary home. They were fish of every colour and shape imaginable. The largest was a pair of catfish who mainly floated in one spot on the far left end of the aquarium, with what looked like huge frowns on their faces. The tiniest were little hyperactive slivers of fish who darted back and forth any which way, for apparently no reason and with no sense of purpose. The ceiling of the foyer was high, and at the top was a round light fixture that sat radiating in the centre of a painted sun. Maria could almost feel the warmth from its rays. She looked at Carlos and grinned.

Upstairs, the room was large, and evidently a two-way immersion Italian-English classroom. Maria judged it to be about grade 2. She still had an eye for grade level work, and the displays of artwork and projects all over the walls indicated to her that the room was occupied daily by little six year olds. Standing in the classroom entrance suddenly filled Maria with a profound sense of nostalgia. It had been a couple months, she realised, since she had last thought about her job back home. She didn't think she missed it, but just then, surrounded by stacks of tiny chairs and tables that rose only a foot and a half and plastic ice cream buckets full of crayons and big mural paper rolls in the corner and stuffed animals sitting along the window sill beside styrofoam cups full of dirt and seeds and popsicle

sticks labelling whose cup of dirt it was, she realised she did. A lump rose to her throat and she held back the water in her eyes. Carlos put his arm around her for a moment and then led her to two empty, adult-sized chairs on the far end.

What had caught his attention more than anything was the bilingualness of the classroom. He could plainly see that the sheets of mathematics tacked to the corkboard and the various other assignments exhibited around the room were done by children who were learning English and Italian at the same time. Much of the work was done in the two languages together. One particular display was a series of posters with the student's photograph glued at the top and then some scribbly lines describing him. They were written half-and-half in English and Italian regardless of whether the photograph was of an Italian child or not. He couldn't tear his eyes away. It was fascinating.

Not to mention the teaching materials floating around the room. If he looked in one direction he could easily have been in Lenika's classroom at Honey, with big alphabet letters and numbers stuck to the wall. But if he looked in the other direction, he could swear he was in an elementary school in Italy! Italian words with pictures of objects like a hat, an orange, a violin, were decorating another wall.

Cheryl Simpson opened with a warm welcome, introduced herself and her background, introduced the volunteers who were translating, and then passed it over to Mr. Wallace who also introduced himself and his background. Both of their credentials were remarkable. Ms. Simpson had a Doctoral degree in Critical Applied Linguistics, and had taught at a teachers' college in Ottawa before moving to Ambury to go back to elementary school teaching, which she had done throughout her studies. It was where her heart lay, she confessed, especially being involved with the Language Inclusive Programme schools now. She had also spent four years in Costa Rica teaching elementary right after finishing her L2 year in Spanish. She was qualified to teach the two-way immersion Spanish-English, and in Quebec she was in demand for the two-way French-Spanish as she was also fluent in French.

Ted Wallace had started out in political science and had merged to education for graduate studies. He had spent a few years abroad working in educational research and eventually marrying a Swedish woman who came back to Canada with him. Out of OISE in Toronto he began training teachers for the LIP schools, after finishing his L2 year in Italian. He mentioned to the audience that the principal at Tove, Adila Gul-Chehra, would be stopping in to meet them later in the evening.

"I would first like to clarify what we mean when we say 'language minority' or 'minority group,'" Ms. Simpson began. "These are communities of individuals and groups here in Ontario, say, who do not fall within the dominant linguistic mould or culture of our society, that is to say,

Anglophone (or Francophone in Quebec). In other words, immigrants and people of ethnolinguistic minority who are born in Canada. 'Minority' does not necessarily suggest fewer in number, as in many parts of the country, the minority groups are more in number than the dominant group. In fact I believe that across Canada they are predicting that within the next decade or so, there will be more speakers of non-official languages than there are French speakers.

"This evening we are going to describe the programme at Tove Elementary, known as a Language Inclusive Programme, or LIP policy. Please feel free to interrupt us at any time if something is not clear.

"The outline and philosophy of the LIP schools are standard across the country. There are many differences from school to school, however, in terms of the particular way the programme is implemented. Each school board, and in some cases, each individual school, is responsible for modifying the programme to meet the needs of the given community. These modifications could be seen in determining *which* languages are offered as two-way immersion and which are not (this is only logical because there are communities with large populations of specific minority language speakers. It would be silly to offer two-way Portuguese immersion in a neighbourhood of 80% Indian children), or they could be seen in the number of students from a common linguistic background required to offer the two-way class. Usually, schools will do an assessment of their lay out for each school year, as the population changes from year to year.

"Here in Ambury, we generally require that there be 10 to 12 children in every grade who speak the same first language in order for the two-way class to be offered in that language. There are many places where, for example, they require a minimum number of children but not necessarily in every grade. So if in one year there happen to be a lot of Mandarin speakers in grade 3, some schools will offer two-way immersion for grade 3 only. Then that same teacher will follow the class through the rest of their elementary school years. It really is up to each school or board to adapt the policy to their particular situation.

"The point of the LIP is to allow all children access to education in their first language, while at the same time teaching them English for communication in the greater Canadian context. It is flexible and constantly changing, being re-evaluated and improved upon. It is more than simply a 'bonus' programme allowing kids to learn new languages, although it is that as well. The LIP policy schools are designed to *better educate*, to educate *more efficiently* and *less discriminatorily* the children of this country. Ted will expand upon this momentarily."

Ms.Simpson clicked to the first powerpoint slide, in English, and there was a rustle of paper as parents flipped to the corresponding page in their home language handout.

“For language minority groups with 10 to 12 children or more in each grade level, Kindergarten through grade 5, two-way immersion is guaranteed. Two-way immersion is where half the school day is taught in English and half is taught in the minority language. The teachers are functional in both languages. The students in these classes are a mix, as even as possible, of native Anglophones and native allophones. An allophone is a native speaker of a language other than English or French in Canada. So for example, in my grade 5 class this year, I have 12 native Spanish speakers and 8 native Anglophones.” She motioned at Mr. Wallace, “Ted, you have what, 9 Italians and 11 Anglophones?” he nodded.

“So what this means is that if your son or daughter’s first language is Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic or Hindi, he or she will spend 50% of the day in English and 50% of the day in your home language at the respective LIP school.” She clarified that there were three LIP schools in Ambury. “Of course, the division is never so clear-cut in practice. We keep the languages separate, in order to force the children to use their weaker language for part of the day, but code-switching, or the mixing of two languages, is still common. This is only natural when bilingual children are acquiring a new language. Children are never punished for the use of a particular language over another, but the day *is* divided, and we have high expectations regarding their development of both languages.

“Because the classes are mixed Anglophone/allophone, your children will have the opportunity to interact with speakers of both languages daily, which gives them an environment for authentic language use. As I said, teachers are able to communicate with the students in either language. They put emphasis, however, on one language at a time. That means that for example in Monday morning math class, the teacher will only speak Mandarin, and then in the afternoon art class, the teacher will only speak English. Then the next day the languages are reversed, and the teacher will reinforce what was learned in math the day before, this time in *English*. Same thing in the afternoon, art in *Mandarin*.

“What this does is allows the Anglophone students to help the Chinese students for part of the day and the Chinese students to help the Anglophones for part of the day. Each and every student has the chance to shine, and at the end of the programme all students are, we hope, empowered, self-confident, and functionally bilingual.

“Two-way immersion programmes similar to the LIP have been implemented in many schools in many countries around the world, and our model is based on the research conducted on many of these programmes, including other Canadian and American models.” Ms. Simpson paused and took a sip of water from her water bottle.

"An important part of the LIP is the connection between school and community. The very high level of parent involvement in the children's education is one of the unique features of the LIP schools. Teachers are specially trained in pedagogical techniques for linking school life and community life in their lesson plans."

A hand at the back of the room. "I was just wondering about families who are not from one of the seven language backgrounds you mentioned. Uh, Portuguese, Mandarin..."

"Yes."

"My son speaks Persian at home and is losing it in the face of schooling entirely in English. But if we switch him to Tove, he will still not be learning in Persian?"

"This is the next important part of the LIP schools." Ms. Simpson clicked to the next slide. A rustle of papers. "Thank you for bringing it up."

"For languages in each district where there are fewer than 10 to 12 students in every grade level, the students are placed in English-medium classes. This means that they receive instruction for most of the day in English, except for a two-hour window every day, either in the morning or the afternoon. At Tove, for instance, the English-medium classes are made up of children who speak Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Urdu, Tamil, Persian and a host of others, *along with* Anglophone children."

"Teachers for these English-medium classes are trained extensively in multicultural education as well as in a variety of languages themselves, so as to be better able to teach in a multilingual environment. The students are encouraged to speak their home languages with each other, of course, and to the teacher when possible. Activities are often completed using the children's first languages. Also, part of the evaluation involves the child's improvement in *communication* in English, which means much more than whether she can complete a written dictation."

"But importantly, in the English-medium classes, the students are removed from class each day for two hours and placed in their respective language groups, even if there are only two students together, in their own room with a member from their minority community. Usually it is the parent of one of the students, and often this individual changes from week to week, depending on how much of a response we receive from the community. The language support staff, as they are called, are not responsible for lesson planning or marking. Their role is to provide access to the subject matter in the child's first language. They are paid for the time they spend with the children communicating in their first language. This means that children from *any* linguistic background receive a bilingual education, no matter how few of them there are, as long as there is at least one willing member of the community to participate in the language inclusive programme on a daily basis. Usually, there are far more."

"This reminds me, if any of you are interested in becoming part of our language support staff, and are available for two hours every day, or some days, please fill out a form during break. We would love to have you on board at Tove, or can refer you to Edwards Public School or Woodthorn."

Ms.Simpson looked over at Mr. Wallace to see if he wanted to take over. He told her to carry on.

"Now, at any point over the years, any one particular linguistic community may expand enough so that there are 10 to 12 students for each grade level." She looked over again at Mr. Wallace, "We are predicting it will be the Tamil-speaking population in Ambury who reaches this threshold next, right?" He nodded. "When this happens, the LIP school hires teachers for K to 5 who went through teachers' college for that language focus, and new two-way immersion classes are formed. Anglophone parents registering their children that year will have the added language option for their children too. I believe Adila is actually considering Tamil for next September in only Kindergarten through grade 2.

Anyways, as you can see, a by-product of the LIP policy is an increasing population of bilinguals, and not just immigrants who have needed to learn English. More and more Anglophone children participating in the two-way immersion classes means more and more open-minded citizens being prepared to live and work in a shrinking world.

"Some of you may have heard of the Minority Language Bursary offered to Canadian teachers who take a third year of teachers' college, called the L2 year. These teachers have the option of choosing one language and acquiring skills enough in that language to teach two-way immersion; or they may go through for the English-medium classes, in which their main focus is on *cultural awareness*. This is the last feature I want to discuss before handing the floor over to Ted.

"During the time that the various minority groups are studying together with the language support staff, the Anglophone students are taking a cultural awareness class. Students in the two-way immersion classes have a cultural awareness component to the curriculum as well. What these classes entail is basically an introduction to contemporary world issues and concerns, current events, international history, Canadian issues of multicultural concern, but most of all, teachers explore with their students the intricacies and uniqueness of different cultures. Needless to say, teachers are trained to teach to the level of the students, beginning with what they already know, even when the topics are mature. Our philosophy is that students are never too young to be learning about acceptance of others and a respect for different points of view. And furthermore, these classes foster an interest in a variety of cultures and languages and hopefully help the students learn to be open-minded, diminishing a potential fear of the unknown. This is done in an appropriate manner for their age group, of course. Up to now the cultural awareness component has received enormous support and positive feedback. We

always look forward to your opinions as parents, and there are frequent opportunities throughout the year for you to voice your comments and concerns.

“Now you may be wondering if it is possible or even wise to have a teacher who has studied a second language for only one year teach in a two-way immersion classroom. Well, what most often happens is that teachers-in-training who are already familiar with a given language, through whatever circumstance, decide to further their knowledge of that language and put it to use in their career. Thus they go through for that option in the L2 year. Depending on how fluent they are, these teachers may be exempt from some or all of the language study classes and instead attend the Cultural Awareness classes of the English-medium option. They are all required to do the second semester abroad.

“It does happen on the rare occasion that there a teacher is encountering his L2 year focus language for the first time. Ted, for instance, went through for Italian but he had not had much contact with that language or even the Italian culture prior to his L2 year. In this case, upon return from their semester abroad, these students must take an examination to be sure their language proficiency is adequate to teach in a two-way immersion class. This examination is in the form of a mock-classroom where the teacher prepares a lesson and teaches it bilingually to a committee of evaluators who decide if she is sufficiently competent linguistically. The committee is made up of a LIP teacher, a LIP administrator, a member of the particular minority language community, and a parent council member.

“If it happens that a teacher goes through for, say, Polish, and then comes back from his semester abroad and has not acquired enough Polish language to teach two-way immersion, well, in that case, the teacher will either be referred for English-medium, or choose to return for a repeat of the L2 year. There can be no rushing to learn a new language, and some people have more of a knack for it than others. This is why the most common scenario is for a student who already has knowledge of a particular language to pursue that language in the L2 year. Luckily, there are lots of students who do have the foundations of many different languages.

“The LIP policy is set up so that two-way immersion teachers coach each other, and thus *pool* their linguistic knowledge base. What this means is that once or twice a week at Tove, for example, a couple of us Spanish-English two-way teachers have our prep-time simultaneously. We are able to plan our lessons together, making sure we are using proper level vocabulary in our weaker language, and are prepared with the language skills needed to teach higher-order thinking to all of our students.

“I remember in my first year at Tove I was teaching grade 1 two-way Spanish and we took a field trip to Christie Park outside of London. When we came across a dead mouse, I realised that I was only sufficiently skilled in the cognitive academic language I needed for this situation in *English*. Therefore the next day when our kids were in gym class, I went over this analysis, talking about death,

prompting students to think in those abstract terms, with my coach. Then I was able to reinforce it in Spanish that afternoon with my students. The emphasis is on developing higher cognitive skills in the children, rather than factual recall. We aim to have the students *think* about things, not just know about them.

“All this just to give you an idea of the set-up at a Language Inclusive Programme school. I think I should hand it over to Ted. If you would like more information about the ways in which teachers are trained for the LIP, please speak to me afterwards and I will be happy to direct to you some sources.” Ms. Simpson smiled and moved a chair over so that Mr. Wallace could wheel himself up the ramp onto the little platform that they had brought into the front of the class for him. Meanwhile, the translators circulated to answer any questions. Maria and Carlos, surprised, waved at Juana Covas Marcos. Then they offered to walk her home after the meeting was done.

Ted Wallace cleared his throat, made a joke, and then clicked a couple of times until the powerpoint was at his first slide. “The first reason we feel the programme at Tove is the most beneficial one available to your children is because numerous studies have been conducted in various parts of the world, including Canada and the United States, that show how much better a student is able to learn when the first language is used as medium of instruction. This means that a native Portuguese student will learn the curriculum material more easily if Portuguese is used as at least one of the languages of instruction. This seems fairly obvious, doesn’t it? One cannot learn in a language one does not understand!

“But, what’s more interesting and perhaps less self-evident, is that it has also been proven repeatedly that students will learn a *new* language more easily if their first language is used in the process. It may seem counter-intuitive to hear that if a Cantonese-speaking student is to learn English, then what she actually needs is more instruction in Cantonese and less in English! Allow me to illustrate this fact with an extremely artistic diagram.” Mr. Wallace grimaced and drew a warped triangle on the board. A small wave of chuckles emanated from the crowd.

It was, he explained, an iceberg. There were two peaks sticking up out of the water. Below the water line, the peaks merged into one solid block of ice. Above the left hand peak he wrote *surface features of L1*. Above the right hand peak, *surface features of L2*. On the iceberg below the water he wrote *common underlying proficiency*. “L1 means first language, and L2 means second language. We call this the Common Underlying Proficiency Model. It is from an applied linguist named Jim Cummins.” Beside the iceberg, Mr. Wallace drew the outline of a head. Inside the brain of the head he drew two balloons. One he labelled as L1 proficiency, and the other as L2 proficiency. “This is the Separate Underlying Proficiency Model.” Some audience members copied down the diagrams.

Mr. Wallace continued, "Many people believe, as I mentioned, that if students are not proficient in English then they need intensive instruction in English. They believe that any attempts at improving the student's English skills through instruction in his or her first language does not make sense.

"This *maximum-exposure theory*, the belief that the more a child is surrounded by the new language the better she will learn it, is represented in *this* diagram." He made a sweeping gesture toward the head drawing. "This diagram assumes that proficiency in a first language is separate from proficiency in a second language, and that there is a direct relationship between exposure to a language and achievement in that language. If this were true, which it is not, then content and skills learned through a child's first language could not transfer to a second language, and vice versa. Imagine these two balloons inside the brain. Blowing into the L1 balloon will only succeed in inflating the L1 but not the L2. Despite how logical this may appear, there is little evidence to support the Separate Underlying Proficiency Model. It is a complete fallacy."

Maria flushed and glanced around hoping nobody noticed. She distinctly remembered believing that theory when she first arrived in Canada. She looked at Juana, half expecting her to flash an *I-told-you-so* look her way, as she had overheard and participated in many of Maria and Julia's debates on the matter.

"Now, *this* diagram," sweeping gesture toward the iceberg, "represents the belief that *either* language can promote development in the proficiency of *both* languages. The research we have reviewed shows that when a child is given adequate exposure to both languages, either in school or in the wider environment, then the underlying proficiency of both will be developed. As the iceberg demonstrates, there is a base of knowledge, or cross-lingual proficiency, that underlies the very different surface manifestations of each language.

"For example, imagine two groups of language minority children. One, group A, is instructed with maximum exposure to English, and children in group B are instructed with less exposure to English but with high quality L1-medium instruction. One possible result would be that both groups show equal competency and skill in the new language (English), and the second, more likely, possible result would be that the group receiving L1-medium instruction shows *better* competency and skill in English. The less time used on instruction in English, the better the results, provided that the time is instead used on good native language medium teaching and good teaching of the new language by bilingual teachers.

"A sound foundation in the child's first language makes it more likely that new languages will be successfully acquired. Students denied this foundation are found to be severely disadvantaged.

Their conceptual development is interrupted, their acquisition of the second language is slowed, and their native language skills are devalued.

“It is so very important to understand that proficiency in a child’s first language and proficiency in her second language are *strongly* related to each other. Promotion of literacy in the first language *does not* bring about negative consequences for the development of the second. In other words, if your child studies in his first language, it will in *no way* obstruct his acquisition of English. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

“At Tove Elementary, the languages used for instruction complement the child’s learning of each. The teachers are trained, as Cheryl was saying, in how to promote academic skills in a second language, and they draw attention to examples of powerful language use in oral and written modes of both languages. Our focus is on *both-and* instead of reducing ourselves to *either-or*.

“We believe our LIP programme to be effective because we can say with confidence that our students are generating new knowledge, and acting on social realities that affect their lives.

What constitutes good learning at a given point in a student’s life is up to the student to define him or herself, but I hope many of you will agree that it involves at least attaining the cultural capital required to use one’s skills to make a positive change in the way the world works.” Some heads nodded. Some translators whispered. Click for the next slide.

“Numerous studies have been conducted that show that children who are given the resources to study in their native language succeed in school better than those who study under an English-only policy. Of course, what constitutes success is difficult to define, but results from the studies show higher motivation, higher grades, higher self-confidence, and more positive self-image in the students learning via their first language.”

Here, Ms. Simpson jumped in, anticipating the on-coming question. “I just want to clarify that we are *not* saying that children living in Canada do not need to be studying or learning English. They do and they must in order to thrive in greater Canadian society. But the common misconception is that going to school in one’s native language will inhibit them from learning English. This is not true. In fact, the opposite is true, as Ted is explaining. I just wanted to underline that the programme at Tove aims at teaching all students English quickly, to reach a high level of proficiency. The difference is that our method uses the child’s first language as a learning resource. This, we believe, is the most effective way of teaching.”

Mr. Wallace, “As an example of the studies we are talking about, consider one discussed by James Crawford. He concludes that ‘English learners performed best in programs that used the most

native-language instruction, such as developmental and two-way bilingual education, and worst in English-only programs’.

“One of the greatest obstacles that language minorities and their advocates face when fighting for linguistic rights, is that there are still many politicians and administrators who simply ignore or conceal research that proves their existing policy to be poor. Portraying the status quo as the only possible way of being is a great strategy for maintaining power. It would not serve the power elites’ interests to spread the word to the general public that their system was disadvantaging minorities, and working only to keep them in oppressed positions. As Malcolm X said in 1965, ‘Power never takes a step back – only in the face of more power’. This is why many Canadians never get word of the linguistic injustices taking place in their schools.

“It is important, also, to realize that the elimination of the use of the student’s first language in the classroom will likely stunt the growth of his or her development of this language. Now, we cannot presume that it is a priority or even a concern of yours that your children maintain and further their development of your native language (although we hope it would be!). But, we do know that some young children still enter elementary school in Ontario without having had extensive contact with the English language, and are not given the opportunity to fully expand or build on their first language. Too often, as already some of you have attested to, this language is forgotten completely as a result of assimilation into the dominant culture. This can potentially then divide families because if the parents do not speak, or choose not to speak English then communication with the child becomes difficult as the gap between his or her knowledge of the two languages widens.

“Again, referring to the literature in the field, a researcher named Ramirez emphasizes this concern when he describes how preschoolers from an English-only programme, who were examined in a study, quickly ceased to speak their first language and switched to English. The result was that the amount of interactions between parent and child were greatly reduced and restricted. Parents were unaware of what was happening at school and found themselves unable to support their child’s learning.

“It is for these reasons that the skills that language minority children bring to the classroom *must* be seen as an additive to the learning environment rather than a subtractive. That is to say, your children possess a skill that should be allowed to flourish and grow in the classroom and in turn positively affect the learning of the Anglophone children.”

Chapter Twenty

The information session paused for 15 minutes. Coffee and cookies were served in the hallway. During the break, while Carlos unhesitatingly helped himself to the refreshments, Maria sat alone in her seat in the classroom, thinking about what had been said. She read through the Spanish version of the powerpoint handout, and went over some of the key points with Juana to make sure she had understood correctly.

One part that interested her was how Lenika and Angel might begin to forget Spanish and feel disconnected to their home country as they gradually became swallowed up by their new country. Indeed, Maria did not want this to happen, as much as she did want them to integrate smoothly. She did not want the first 10 years of her daughter's life to be forgotten or, worse, deemed valueless. She wanted Lenika to be proud of her nationality, to yearn to go back one day and use the skills she had learned in Canada to help her people bring themselves out of poverty. This is what Maria herself wanted to do. Maybe she could still. Maybe she could one day move back there.

Yes, she wanted Lenika to become a full member of Canadian society, but she did not want her to lose her family's roots. In fact, the more she thought about it, the more Maria realized that this process of assimilation had already begun to happen with Lenika. She had come home miserable from school for weeks and weeks, and then slowly began to take the measures she needed to fit in. But these measures did not include expressing pride in her background and language, but rather an urgency to replace them with the dominant culture of Canada.

Lenika had stopped reading the chapter books they brought from home and instead spent hours in front of the television staring blankly at the characters puttering around in their busy sit-com lives in English. That was the cool thing to do. She didn't want to eat what Maria cooked anymore. She wanted fluorescent yellow waffles from a box for breakfast and fluorescent orange cheese sandwiches for lunch. She wanted to paint her nails, she wanted specific sneakers from a specific store. Maria did not recognize the new materialistic side to her. Then she started wanting to sleep over at her new friends' houses. *All* the Canadian girls did it, she claimed.

When she came home from these extravaganzas, it always took her the better half of the next day to shake the high-pitched, artificial giggle she had acquired overnight. Maria began to feel angry at herself for not seeing this earlier. How could she be so naïve as to believe she could force Lenika to merge quickly into Canadian culture and yet expect her to maintain the culture and ways she knew before, when in Lenika's mind they were no doubt in conflict. Maria was confused, but realized that her daughter must feel even more confused.

Maria felt ashamed that she had forced Lenika to assimilate and had not taught her the difference between assimilating and integrating. She had never mentioned to Lenika that she hoped for her to keep ties with her friends and family back home, and to continue to read and write in Spanish for her whole life, even if she were learning English. Of course, Maria consoled herself, she herself had wrongly believed that English had to be learned first and separately before any further Spanish could be learned. Or, before Lenika could go back to appreciating her background she first had to gain acceptance and an appreciation for Canadian culture. She simply had not known until now that they could be done simultaneously, and in fact, it turned out, they would complement each other when used together in Lenika's education.

After digesting her thoughts, Maria felt infinitely relieved to have this new information, and she felt much better equipped to help her children make decisions for their future. Carlos came back from the refreshment stand with a cookie for her.

When everyone had taken their seats again, Ted Wallace introduced a woman who had appeared up front at some point during the break. She was a short woman in her late 40s with beautiful slanted eyes. She wore a hijab, but she let her bangs hang down and they brushed the sides of her cheeks. Maria and Carlos recognized her from the evening when she introduced Donaldo de Diego. "This is Adila Gul-Chehra, principal at Tove Elementary. She and I have been working together for, ouf, almost 15 years on the LIP school initiative."

Mrs. Gul-Chehra took a step forward and folded her hands in front of her. "Thank you so much for coming this evening. It is very encouraging to see such a great interest in the Language Inclusive Programme. I sincerely hope that you consider one of our LIP schools for your children, and if it is Tove, I will be pleased to personally register you and show you around. My phone number is on the cover of the hand-out, so don't hesitate to give me a call if you need any further information." She smiled a wide smile at Ted and Cheryl who were standing off to the side. Then she hopped off the stage and headed back down to her office where she was packing up to head home.

Ted Wallace took the floor. He clicked to the next series of powerpoint slides. He made another joke, then began. "The LIP philosophy is grounded on the belief that all human beings have the right to develop and relate to a meaningful self and communal identity. This cannot be accomplished without language, as human beings do not separate the world they know from the language or languages through which they come to know it. I am sure that many of you can relate to this sentiment, and no doubt have anecdotes from your own experiences in languages.

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as you may know, is a declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. It consists of 30 articles that outline the view of the United

Nations on the human rights guaranteed to all people. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to education...Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups...' What we assume at Tove is that if it is one's basic human right to receive an education, then *necessarily*, it is one's right to a language inclusive policy, that is to say, education in their first language. Such a policy is required in order to exercise this basic human right, as an education without such a policy can in fact prohibit the child from becoming fully educated, according to the definition of the Declaration." Mr. Wallace stopped a moment before continuing to allow this information to sink in, and for the translators to clarify whatever was necessary.

"If language minorities in Canada, such as many among us here tonight, are not given access to education in their first language, or at very least, the opportunity to fully develop their native language, then they are being denied the dignity afforded to every human being under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Change of slide on the powerpoint screen. "John Ogbu, a great American anthropologist, describes, among many other things, a common process where a minority group student may come to dislike or be ashamed of his or her ethnic origin. He or she may feel obligated to adopt the dominant group's ways, even if that means being frowned upon in his or her ethnic community.

"We believe, however, that schools should not tolerate a policy that cultivates such a dilemma within a child. Such a policy can only be described as discriminatory because it is taking away from the child's ability to develop a positive sense of self.

"If, however, at school, the child is allowed to use the language that he already knows, which will help him learn English and will allow him to excel in ways that are impossible in an unfamiliar language, and his cultural and linguistic background are used as a resource in the classroom to help everyone understand his perspectives, he will, as discussed earlier, learn *more* quickly. At the same time, the student will feel less like an outsider, because his language and culture are being valued. His self-confidence will grow as he becomes bilingual in the two languages. In the end, he will have learned to better communicate in the new language, have continued his development of his first language, and have been able to cultivate a healthy identity that includes a positive view of himself in the new culture along with a positive view of himself in his native culture.

"What's more, the child will feel empowered as an individual because he is able to help the students out who are learning *his* language and about *his* culture." Mr. Wallace directed his audience's attention to the screen at the front of the room once again. "Forcing integration into a dominant language classroom can prevent minority students from acquiring the competencies they need, in their

own language and culture, in the dominant language and culture, and in content material. This is the crux of the matter”.

Ms.Simpson was up. “Most importantly, it should be remembered that a nation would benefit on the whole from a multilingual, culturally well-rounded population. Diversity is one of Canada’s greatest assets, and it should be cultivated as a valuable resource and not stomped on as though a threat. Minority children and their families provide Canada with a wealth of knowledge that can serve to strengthen the economy through international relations and reduce prejudices and stereotypes formed through ignorance of a people or culture. To attempt to impose uniformity is to condemn ourselves to narrower and poorer lives.

“I have no doubt that many of you know first hand what abuse of power looks and feels like, much better than I do.” She motioned towards Mr. Wallace as she said this, as though *I* in this case meant *we*. He nodded. She continued. “The English language has long been used by dominant Anglophone countries as a weapon for control. To speculate for a moment on the oppressor’s thoughts, *If I can make you learn my language, then I can control what information you receive and what resources you have access to, especially if I can make you forget your other languages. Then you would be really stuck. Then you would have no choice but to learn what I tell you to learn and do with it what I tell you to do with it.*”

A woman in the front cut in. “This reminds me of George Orwell’s ‘1984’ where the society he describes has an entire Ministry dedicated to re-writing the English language. The new version of the language, *Newspeak*, is designed to control human thought. Its vocabulary is a direct representation of the values and beliefs of the ruling party, and it is intended that once *Newspeak* is the only form of language in use, any thought outside the ideology of the government would be impossible. Seeing as concepts such as intellectual freedom and democracy no longer existed, the government decided there was no need to have words to represent these concepts. The point was that there would be no words to describe undesirable thoughts, and therefore no way to *think* undesirable thoughts.”

“Thank you, absolutely, that is a great example of one author’s speculation on how far the power of language control can go. In fact, Noam Chomsky commented on Orwell’s *Newspeak* in an interview I read. He was comparing Orwell’s *Newspeak* to the ways in which the United States government has historically controlled the public mind. He gave an example from the morning newspaper’s headlines, and it really made me realize how present thought control is in our society, in our day-to-day life. Having the knowledge and skills to resist such brainwashing is crucial, and children need to be taught about it.”

The woman nodded in agreement.

Ms.Simpson continued. "Setting up schools to teach their own language is one of the first things colonizers do when they settle in a new territory. Rulers insist on the importance of minority groups learning the dominant language so that they can, to a large extent, decide on the official messages given to the public because they control the media. This is a principle reason for insisting that immigrant minorities learn majority languages, such as yourselves and your children learning English. Minorities are made to shift from their own languages to majority languages and cultures, sometimes without even knowing it, by making the resources they have seem invisible or like handicaps preventing them from entering mainstream culture. One exception might be 19th Century British Hong Kong where the rulers wanted the people only to learn *about* their 'superior' culture, but not merge to it because they were afraid that would make them unwilling to perform manual labour and grow opium and then they might not be as docile and easy to control. Long story.

"But usually, governments and educational authorities will impose their language by depriving immigrant resources of value on the linguistic and cultural market. What we believe is that a human being, and subsequently a nation, is *enriched* by the knowledge of multiple languages and cultural capital, and more importantly, that it is fully normal and possible to become fluent in more than one language at any age, and enjoy mainstream and alternative culture at the same time. One does not hinder nor inhibit the other. Nobody should have to choose between his or her home culture and language, and a new one in a new country. It is entirely possible and beneficial for both to exist simultaneously in someone's life, adding deeper knowledge and greater participation in a multicultural setting like in Canada." Ms.Simpson had to stop here to catch her breath. She was getting worked up, and Mr. Wallace could see it. When she looked at him, something in her eyes said 'yours', and he took it.

"The point we wish to make is that forcing language minority students, here in Ontario, for example, to become monolingual in only the dominant language, robs them of the freedom to counteract these forces of power that Cheryl is discussing. The fewer languages that are spoken, the easier it is to control people. For example, imagine a world where there are only a handful of languages spoken, those of the ruling classes. This limits the networks of language through which people can communicate and discuss varying opinions about the information they receive. If there are many languages being used, then the dominant class is not necessarily in control of the information people have access to, as they can access much more outside the dominant language circle.

"However, as we mentioned earlier, knowing the dominant language, English, is necessary in order to understand and critically reflect upon the messages given by the institutions in power. To deconstruct the messages, one needs to know the language of those messages well. But more

importantly still, people's own languages are needed for building up the knowledge and reflection base needed for counter-realities, that is, a society that is not divided between oppressed and oppressors.

"Alternative ideas and ideologies embodied in a variety of cultures are likewise a necessary counterweight to oppressive ideologies. This is why bilingual education is a right for everyone. What we want you to take away from this meeting is that the LIP programme at Tove is based on the idea that language cannot be separated from culture. Language minority students, therefore, have much to offer children of the dominant culture and can often provide a teaching resource in matters of multicultural education potentially superior to the teacher's knowledge."

He looked at Ms.Simpson and chuckled. "We certainly know this to be true from our own experience! At Tove, interaction between language minority children themselves, and also between Anglophone children and allophone children is promoted with the use of *any* language chosen. The purpose of bilingual education is not only to empower minority students, but also to give access to new and enriching forms of knowledge to dominant group students. By using language minority students as resources in a classroom, *all* students learn to respect and value cultures that are different from their own."

New slide on the powerpoint. Ms.Simpson took a step back up toward the front of the stage, and Mr. Wallace wheeled back a bit. "The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights states in Section 2 – Article 15 that:

All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal all the human and material resources necessary to ensure that their language is present to the extent they desire at all levels of education within their territory: properly trained teachers, appropriate teaching methods, text books, finance, buildings and equipment, traditional and innovative technology.

The LIP policy is closely related to this statement. The use of the home language in bilingual classrooms enables children to succeed at grade-level school work, reinforces the bond between the home and school, and allows all children and their families to participate effectively in school activities. Furthermore, if the children acquire literacy skills in their first languages, as adults they should be functionally bilingual, with an advantage in a technical or professional career nationally or internationally.

"The language inclusive programme treats multicultural education as a way of being within the school walls, and of course, spilling over to the outside as well. Multiculturalism and multilingualism permeate all facets of the child's daily environment. It is not policy where the school celebrates its

ethnic diversity on a designated day or week of the school year. It is one where multiple cultures, ethnicities, languages, and beliefs are represented as equally valid and valuable and are equally present in all areas of the curriculum. Also, the atmosphere of the school physically represents and promotes the belief in diversity and equality. Inclusive language policy, like multicultural education, has to be a way of life in the school. It has to be promoted and exemplified by all educators and students at all times.

"I invite you to stop by Tove Elementary again any day and have a look around. We are happy to offer tours and it makes our students proud to have their work on display for visitors to see." She smiled, looked around, then said "Ted and I are going to stay for a while in case anyone has any questions. Thank you very much and have a pleasant evening."

Chapter Twenty one

On the bus back home that evening, Ms.Simpson thought about how far she had come since she decided to leave Honey four years ago. She was conscious of how much happier she was now, working at Tove and involved in an education system in which she really believed. Memories of arguments with Dan Hart came rushing into her head and she fought them out with all her might. But negative memories are powerful memories, and she found herself sitting looking out the window of the bus, reliving the moments of frustration that had so frequently occupied her time at Honey.

"It can't work. It's simply not possible under our circumstances."

"Our circumstances? What exactly are our circumstances?" Ms.Simpson looked him straight in the eye, tilted her head persistently to one side, and demanded his answer. Mr. Hart's office was beginning to heat up, as their voices and blood temperatures rose. They had been in a meeting since 4:00 and they had not gotten any further ahead. They appeared to be at a roadblock. Different ideas, different priorities, and, Ms.Simpson suspected, different depth of understanding in the field.

It had begun with her venting to him how upsetting it was to be trying to instil in her students day after day a sense of acceptance and appreciation for each other's differences and an awareness of their similarities, only to have it contradicted by the attitude displayed by some dominant group members of the staff at Honey. They acted in ways that suggested that the immigrants had best merge with the mainstream as quickly and quietly as possible, an attitude Ms.Simpson did not agree with. If you work hard, you'll get ahead. Just become like the rest of us. Somehow this outlook rubbed Ms.Simpson the wrong way.

Even if it wasn't so explicitly expressed, underneath the guise of *acceptance of all* Ms.Simpson felt a presence of *as long as you conform*. She had seen too many children suffer because their teachers held the idea that their low scores on tests were brought on by their own failure to learn English or adapt to Canadian culture. No matter how hard they worked, the school system and curriculum was designed mainly for, based on the assumptions of, white, middle class, Anglophones. If you didn't fit, it was likely you would struggle more than your dominant culture counterparts.

She had had too many kids cry on her shoulder because they were frustrated and hurt by the way someone had treated them. Ms.Simpson knew that study after study had produced far higher results in second language acquisition from bilingual programmes as opposed to sink-or-swim English-only programmes such as the one she was dealing with now. She had come to her wit's end in this system.

She wanted to be part of a system where teachers were trained in critical constructivism. That is, to recognize that the different life experiences of each student affect their understanding of the world, and how everything from ethnicity to socio-economic status to religion contributes to a child's self concept. Teachers, she believed, needed to be trained to help students develop their individuality, aware that the differences in the classroom are resources that should be used to foster cross-cultural understanding, especially among the dominant group members because often one's own culture seems invisible. This can be dangerous because in a country like Canada, people from all over the world have come together to live and build a stronger country. If the dominant group members are blind to their own cultural idiosyncrasies, they will be more prone to judge and treat others as outsiders.

But most importantly, Ms.Simpson knew that the LIP schools *empowered* language minority students. Having spent some of her own student life in non-English speaking countries, Ms.Simpson knew that Canada was not doing all it could to accommodate the linguistic diversity that thrived within its borders. She had seen and lived language policies that juggled three or four languages without flinching, in India for example. True, Canada juggled English, French, and some, though not many, native languages. But, with immigration necessarily and thankfully on the rise, she knew this country needed to be making changes to the education system, and fast.

Hart was droning in her ear. "We don't have the resources in Ambury, the multilingual teachers, the bilingual textbooks, it is not practical. How do you expect to deal with all the rest of the language minorities who don't get the programme? It is not fair to give these resources to only *some* of our students. You know we have growing Indian and Korean communities in Ambury. Do you expect to provide the same to all of them?"

"Yes," Ms.Simpson responded coolly. "Dan, do you even know the first thing about how and why the LIP schools are set up the way they are? Yes, they do provide all language minority students with the bilingual resources they deserve and require for a just education. Do you and your 'friends in high places' not want your positions of power threatened by a growing group of immigrants gaining authority and command in their own languages? Is that what this is about? You know, I just don't see why else it could be that you would want to fight to keep such a policy from expanding." She had insulted him, it was clear, but as his face turned red he kept his cool and Ms.Simpson listened as he went on with his there's-simply-no-money talk. All she could think was about how many times she'd already been through this with him.

"It's too expensive, Cheryl. The kinds of changes to the school the LIP would require would cost way too much for our budget, just ask Walter Bennington, he'll tell you. I don't see where we can cut from. To pay for all the translations alone, imagine!"

"It is not too expensive. It is too expensive *not* to. It is an investment in our children's education and the future of our country. Don't you see the economic benefits it could bring Canada, having a system that fosters multilingualism and open-mindedness in everyone? Perhaps money will be needed in the first few years, but in the long run, Dan, in the long run these students, who will likely achieve higher grades as a result from having access to the subject material in their first language, will then in turn get jobs and be contributing back into the economy in ways monolingual citizens cannot. Canada is a rich, rich country.

"The world works together nowadays, and a multilingual population is much more valuable to a nation than one where everyone speaks only one and the same language. Homogeneity is not as healthy as diversity. And what's more, the resources required for this programme already exist, it is just a question of acquiring them from LIP schools in Toronto or Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver..."

Ms.Simpson hadn't taken her eyes off of Mr. Hart during their entire conversation, except to wave her hands in the air to emphasize a point or two. Meanwhile he had sat back down behind his desk, arranged the papers that were scattered all over the place into four random piles, and was now sitting with elbows on desk and hands folded over top of each other, feigning an indifference to her words.

She went on. "The 'great expense' myth needs to be abolished because it continuously provides an excuse to governments and boards of education to resist implementing multilingual education programmes. It does not cost any more to provide a multilingual classroom than it does to provide, for example, a traditional English-only classroom. There has been lots of research done on this, Dan.

“And what’s more, our government *subsidizes* teacher training to get teachers the qualifications they need for the programme. We do pay them more if they have studied an extra year, but rightfully so! This encourages teachers to better equip themselves for a Canadian classroom, filled with kids from so many ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Do you not think that it is absurd to be wasting the linguistic resources these newcomers to Canada bring with them? Children arrive already on the path to literacy in a wide variety of languages and we spend all sorts of money getting them to shift from that language to English. It is much more expensive to make everyone monolingual!

“And on top of that, after we have made all these multilingual people merge to monolingual Anglophones, we then spend a huge amount of money to *retrain* multilinguals! Is this not ridiculous? We have university students in second language classes, like Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, anything you could imagine, when they originally had a strong base in that language as a child. So we have paid twice. First to wipe out their first language and make them English speaking, and then again to re-educate them in a second language almost from scratch.

“The costs for countries or world organisations to have multilingual language policies are *lower* than to get everyone on the planet to be monolingual. Think about necessary communications and their costs. Physical communication costs enormous sums, pollutes the planet, transports often unnecessary things. We have to make it cheaper, for example, to produce food and commodities locally where it is possible and instead use the money for improved mental communication. This would include supporting diversity and multilingualism. It is the world’s linguistic majority populations, the monolinguals, who cause much of the costs of language issues, but minorities pay because they have agreed to learn *their* languages in order for communication to work. It is not often that we see a leader of a dominant country with a linguistically diverse population, like Canada, America, England, learning the minority languages spoken by the citizens, is it? Those who object to bilingualism often do so because they are afraid of differences and are unable to reconcile themselves with their loss of control over society.”

A loud siren passing by outside brought Ms.Simpson back to herself and she quickly realized that her bus stop was next. She yanked the cord and waited for the bus to pull over before she gathered up her belongings and hurried down the block towards her apartment building.

Chapter Twenty two

Sunday at dinner time the Costas were still discussing the matter. Angel went to bed first, after he had cleared his plate, brushed his teeth, and watched the one television show he was allowed per day. Lenika was allowed to stay up because, after all, she was a crucial member of the decision that was in the works. By about 10:00 in the evening, Maria and Carlos and Lenika had come to the unanimous decision that the children would attend Tove Elementary from then on. That meant that Lenika had better get registered as soon as possible, for she would be joining the class over two months into the school year. That night, Lenika got to bed around 10:30, and so in the morning her parents let her sleep in. It was the first school day she had missed in Canada. They would go tomorrow to Tove and register, and Wednesday Lenika would start again. All over again.

PART TWO

Chapter One

Lenika spent the rest of Monday with Angel at the park in front of the library. She took him there after lunch, and their father let them take the disposable camera he had purchased in Toronto but never finished. There were eight pictures left, and Lenika democratically allotted five to herself and three to her little brother, who bought the explanation that since she was older she was allowed to take more pictures. Still, after his initial hesitation towards the deal, Lenika was forced to promise that he could *tell* her what to take a picture of for one of her extra shots. He chose a huge maple tree with bright red leaves. She agreed, and they took turns looking through the camera to judge which angle was the best. Of course, Lenika suspected that if given the opportunity, Angel would snap the little button on the camera, so she decided that only she should be the one to hold the camera, even when he was testing the angle.

And so they stood, sister behind brother, Lenika holding the camera with an outstretched arm in front of Angel's eye. He said forward or backward or left or right, and they shuffled along in this awkward position until they found the best spot, at which time Lenika waited until Angel gave the command (he was, after all, the one looking through the lens) and she snapped the button. The library itself, the pine tree beside the front door, the hole in the ground they were convinced the rabbit lived,

the pile of leaves caught in the maple tree's branches they were convinced was a bird's nest, and the shiny grey car parked in the parking lot were among the selected objects featured in their remaining photographs. The afternoon passed quickly, and before they knew it, they could see their mother strolling up the sidewalk coming to collect them for dinner.

Tuesday morning Maria and Lenika walked up the steps to Tove Elementary. Although the printing was small, the signs directing newcomers around the school were written in about eight different languages. The two of them stood in front of the main sign and discussed which language was which. They managed to identify about five of them. Lenika was getting excited, and Maria was pleased to see that Spanish was without a doubt a firm and embedded part of the culture of the school. Both mother and daughter were eager to find out more. Maria squeezed Lenika's hand and they followed the arrows to the main office down the hall, stopping only twice to look at the fish in the foyer aquarium.

When they stepped inside, the secretary sitting behind the desk was the last thing they noticed. Their attention was fully taken by the elaborate display surrounding them on all four walls. It looked like each section of the display had landed here in this Canadian office directly from a foreign country. Like little snippets of life from around the world. Their eyes went from section to section and finally landed on the one representing their home country. Lenika burst out, "Mira mamá!" Maria went over to look at it and right away tears came into her eyes. Lenika paused for a moment, but was too enthralled by the other displays to remain long on a single one.

After a few minutes, Lenika pulled her mother over to the front desk where the secretary welcomed them warmly in Spanish. He was a young man, maybe 30, with long hair tied back behind his neck. His thick eyebrows moved up and down when he spoke, so dramatically that Lenika had to suppress a giggle. Maria nudged her. Their conversation took place mainly in English, but the secretary did his best to use Spanish whenever he could, although he spoke sloppily. His name was Javier and he was of Spanish descent.

"If you can please fill out this registration form, I will inform the principal, Mrs. Gul-Chehra, of your arrival and she will meet with you shortly." He handed Maria a clipboard with a Spanish-language registration form.

She looked at it, then he said, "It is just to obtain accurate information about your daughter's prior learning history, and to find out some of your preferences in terms of contact protocol, like having translators present and such. Oh, and there's a bit about your daughter's immunization records, which you can get back to us on if you need to." Javier winked at Lenika who was swinging on his desk. She

smiled shyly and her dimples made him laugh. He turned back to Maria, "If you have any questions, please let me know." She sat down in one of the chairs along the wall.

After a few minutes, Javi made a phone call to the principal's office and when Maria was finished filling out the registration form, he told her that Mrs. Gul-Chehra was going to come over as soon as her meeting was through, in about ten minutes. Maria was pleased and impressed, especially as she remembered the long and frustrating ordeal she and her husband had had to endure for registration at Honey. The astonished look on her face made the secretary proud.

When she arrived, Mrs. Gul-Chehra introduced herself and led Maria and Lenika into her office, which was across the hall. She was following a standard procedure for registration of new students, but the meeting was informal. First the principal reviewed the registration form and documentation collected by Javier. Then she decided on a class for Lenika based on the parents' wish for two-way or English-medium, her age, and the number of students in the classes already. Ms. Cheryl Simpson, grade 5 two-way Spanish, was to be Lenika's teacher, and she was very nice.

Next, Mrs. Gul-Chehra proceeded to complete an information sheet with the help of Maria. It covered important information about Lenika's previous schooling and medical history. The report cards and such documents brought by Maria were photocopied and attached to this sheet. After that part was over, Mrs. Gul-Chehra explained some of the routines at Tove like the school hours, and entry and exit procedures. Finally, she answered Maria's few questions, and informed them that tomorrow morning she would meet them before the morning bell rang in order to introduce Lenika to her teacher and show them where the classroom was. There would be a volunteer from her class who would give Lenika (and Maria, if she wished) a complete tour of the school.

Chapter Two

It was finally the big day. Tuesday night Lenika had had a restless sleep out of anticipation, and it showed on her delicate cheeks the next morning. She was up and brushing her hair in the dark when Maria walked in to wake her up.

"I didn't want to wake Angel," she whispered to her mother. Maria switched on the light and the corners of her mouth curved up in a little smile when she saw that her daughter had tried to get dressed in the dark and was wearing two different socks and an inside-out t-shirt.

Carlos came in, caught on that they were whispering because it was still too early to wake Angel, and told Lenika to come over to the door.

"I have something for you, mi tesoro," he said. Lenika's eyes twinkled. From behind his back, Carlos presented her with a white hair band covered in tiny pink flower beads. He had picked it up at the drug store on his way home last night and thought it might give her a little boost of confidence for her first day at her new school. Her second new school. She hugged him and they went downstairs for breakfast. Angel had sat up in bed and Maria was singing to him.

As expected, that morning Javi called to Mrs.Gul-Chehra and she arrived to take the Costas up to the second floor. Lenika's hair band caught the light in the foyer and the flower beads twinkled. Ms.Simpson's classroom was the first door on the right, and she was standing looking out of the window when the troupe knocked and entered.

"Good morning, Cheryl," the principal said in Spanish. "You have met Maria and Carlos Costa?"

Ms.Simpson came over, her blonde hair bobbing as she walked. "Si, como estan ustedes?"

Mrs.Gul-Chehra continued, "This is their daughter Lenika who is starting at Tove today. She will be joining your class." Ms.Simpson shook Lenika's hand and complimented her on her shiny hair band. Lenika beamed. Mrs.Gul-Chehra had already briefed Ms.Simpson on important information pertaining to Lenika's background, and given her the registration forms to look over.

At the library, Mrs.Gul-Chehra introduced them to Mrs. Wong, the librarian. Their conversation switched into English, however the first thing Mrs. Wong did was ask Lenika if she would like to learn how to say hello in Mandarin. Lenika repeated very carefully what Mrs. Wong articulated.

"I will leave you here, I have another family to meet with in a little while," Mrs.Gul-Chehra said to the others. "Have a great first day, Lenika, and stop in soon to my office to say hello!" She turned and headed down the hallway.

"Come with me and I will show you around," Mrs. Wong said to the Costas.

A short time later, back in classroom 21, Lenika was paired up with a small blonde girl who was at first very shy, but when she saw that Lenika was even more shy, pepped up a bit. Her name was Kristin Kabytov, Lenika determined, and she was going to be her learning buddy for the year. Kristin had transferred from the English-medium class only a couple weeks ago, and originally had been placed with Carla from the Dominican Republic because Carla was doubled with Angela and Tamara, but Ms.Simpson really wanted everyone to have only one buddy. But then the three girls had put up such a fuss over being separated, that Ms.Simpson decided to keep that group of three together, and put Kristin with Lenika when she arrived. This meant that Kristin would be without a buddy for a few days, but that was alright.

Ms.Simpson had her classroom set up in groups of four desks scattered about the room, and her own desk off to the side. The carpet and the reading area, complete with three beanbag chairs, were at the front, along with the chalkboard. There were about four large potted plants in the reading area, and a handful more spread out around the room. Every day someone was in charge of watering them.

Lenika's desk was moved beside Kristin's at a station with Felipe and his two buddies, Nathan and Jamie. Jamie, a chubby blond boy who had rosy cheeks whether it was freezing cold, sweltering hot, or anything in between, was picking up Spanish very quickly, and could make out most of what Felipe and Lenika said to each other in their quick, native tongue speech. Nathan, not quite so. He understood Ms.Simpson very well, as did all the kids, but when it came time for him to put his thoughts into words, Nathan searched and searched, and usually came out with a hybrid version of what he was trying to say. Of course, that was normal, and he was never penalized on assignments or quizzes for using a hybrid language. Ms.Simpson's challenge was to make sure that he *did* know how to express himself proficiently in each language separately.

"My friends, we are all language learners in this class, including me, and learning a language is not easy. So, we are all going to be making mistakes, aren't we?" Ms.Simpson nodded along with the 20 nodding heads. "Well then, let's make some mistakes! I want to hear you talking! Aunque digamos muchos errores, tenemos que hablar porque estamos aprendiendo un nuevo idioma... entonces, hacemos errores! Quiero escucharlos hablar!"

Chapter Three

English-medium students were not normally permitted to switch into the two-way immersion classes because of the risk they would lag behind the others in terms of language level. But as Kristin had been spending summers in Spain at her grandparents' villa, and Kristin's parents felt she had learned enough Spanish to merge into the grade 5 two-way class smoothly, it was approved. Kristin had had to have a language assessment before switching, which was why she was only now, at the end of October, arriving in Ms.Simpson's class.

Kristin achieved a high level on her Spanish oral skills evaluation, although writing was lower. No problem, thought everyone involved, she will work hard and catch up. Ms.Simpson had arranged for one of the Ambury High volunteers to work one-on-one with Kristin for a half hour, three times a week after school in order for her to get her writing skills up to par. This didn't bother Kristin at all

because two of her friends from her old class were also in the study room after school on the same days.

The first Monday that Kristin and her friends, Miho and Jaswinder, arrived in the study room after school for their extra help session, they naturally sat all together at one round table and waited for their tutors. It was clear they had no intention of dividing up to work in Spanish, Japanese, and Punjabi, as was necessary. When the high school students arrived, they weren't quite sure what to do, and they stood looking at the girls sitting innocently beside each other, elbows on the table, swinging their legs and waiting for their lessons to begin. Finally, one volunteer named Kazu laughed and took matters into his own hands. He directed Kristin over to the table beneath the window, Jaswinder over to the table beside the computer desk, and he sat down beside Miho, and all was in order. The girls whined, reluctantly went to their designated stations with their tutors, and the sessions finally began.

Lenika, on the other hand, had not had to take a test before she switched to Tove. When they first arrived in Ambury, Mrs. Kelly, the superintendent, had explained to them that the policy for immigrants was different than for native Anglophones. There was no choice but to put them with others their age. Lenika would go into grade 5, no matter what level her English was at. In fact, Lenika remembered clearly being in Mrs. Kelly's office with her parents and brother. It was a morning when they first arrived in their new city. Being the end of August, people like Mrs. Kelly were back at work, even though students did not start for another two weeks. Lenika's parents had already met with her once, and they liked her. They liked her straightforward manner and her honesty. She herself had immigrated to Canada from Kenya with her parents when she was very young. Lenika just thought she was a pleasant woman whom she could not understand for the life of her.

During that second meeting with Mrs. Kelly, as her parents sat in the tall chairs round the conference table, Lenika and Angel got to play on the computer. Computers, let alone computers with internet, were rare back home, and the few times in her life she had gotten the opportunity to play on one, she chose Cyborg the Revenge. It was a game that Ana had shown her, and Ana's cousin had a computer. Of course, it was so slow and it took so long to obey any of her commands that she was usually called away before she could pass to the second level. Ana had made it to the third level just before Lenika emigrated. The third level was where the Cyborg grew two heads and could see you when it was around the corner. Ana promised that she would save all her allowances and come to Canada when she was older to visit Lenika and bring her Cyborg the Revenge.

There, in Mrs. Kelly's office, Lenika and Angel had sat bickering over who would control the mouse. The games the superintendent had available for children waiting in her office unfortunately did not include Cyborg the Revenge. But the kids opened up a game called Tiger Island and with Lenika's

winning hand on the mouse and Angel's wide eyes leaning over her arm, gaping at the screen, they were occupied for the duration of the appointment.

What they missed, Carlos explained to Lenika on the walk home, was the bad news that Lenika did indeed have to take a placement test if she was going to attend Honey Elementary, which she was. It was to determine what level she was at for ESL instruction. This was something that Lenika had been becoming increasingly afraid of ever since Felipe had told her about his experience. Felipe had taken a placement test at the beginning of his first year at Honey. Once the ESL classes started, Felipe's positive demeanour began to disappear and his outlook on learning the English language quickly changed from keen to utterly discouraged. Julia Covas Marcos had told the Costas once when she was visiting that it had broken her heart to see her little boy so disheartened.

At this point, Lenika had only been in Canada a short time and that story had sent her heart plummeting to the depths of her stomach. Now, after all that Felipe had been through, her parents were still sending her to Honey. She protested as much as she could. It just didn't seem to make sense to her. Why would her parents want her to go to a school that had made Felipe sad? The only person she knew in this strange country now went to Tove. That alone seemed to Lenika a good enough reason for her to go there too.

When Julia described Felipe's ESL test, it sounded more like they were interested in his test-taking and memorization skills, not his language or communication abilities. Felipe was strong in English, in fact. He was one of the few immigrant students in his grade who could communicate naturally with the teacher after only a few years living in Canada.

Julia shook her head and concluded, "Sabes, it's just like dancing. We don't teach our children the steps to the salsa or the rumba, but they learn it beautifully just by dancing with us. When you try to measure someone's ability to dance the salsa or the rumba, you do not have him sit at a desk and fill in the blanks about the sequence of specific steps in that dance. No. You would have them dance! Of course, you would have them dance and you would evaluate their overall ability to feel the music and move appropriately at the right moments.

"Si. Language is the same as dancing. How can they evaluate someone's ability to communicate in English by not even having them communicate in English? Isn't it more important that Felipe know how to greet someone politely and suitably express his gratitude for their generosity than to know on paper that what follows the auxiliary in the present perfect must be the past participle? Claro. If he *knows* this, he will eventually learn to *do* it naturally. It will sound right to him when he is actually communicating in English. Just like he would know to spin his partner at a particular moment in a dance because it feels right, even if he couldn't say what that rule of dance was."

She thought about this for a moment. Then, "Of course, I am not denying that there is a technical aspect to language, as there is to dance. It is important for our children to understand the grammatical features of English in order to use them properly and make themselves understood. Claro. Same in Spanish. When Felipe was very little he made many errors speaking Spanish, and he still does! But it is by using the language and being involved in a relationship with the language that we learn to correct these errors. Not by memorizing the verb book.

"Until Felipe and Lenika and Angel have the opportunity to engage with English in a meaningful way, they will not appreciate all the corrections in the world. That test made me so mad, Maria. It accomplished nothing but to label Felipe as unskilled. He played with the other kids in his ESL class on weekends in our basement, and sometimes I would go down to check on them and they were speaking in English, but really in a mish-mash of hybrids from all their languages. I am still lost when I listen to them. Their communication is so fluent and so comprehensible amongst themselves, and yet at school they were removed from class to be put in special classes separate from the others where they had to stare at textbooks and regurgitate the language on an exercise sheet. This does not mean they can use English in normal talk, and yet it determines their English level ability." She threw her arms up in the air in exasperation. Then she had to leave, she had left something in the oven.

Kristin's test, Lenika learned on that first day at Tove, had been nothing at all like Felipe's. Kristin spent the lunch hour babbling to Lenika about her first couple weeks in the two-way immersion class, which she simply referred to as being "in Spanish." The girls switched back and forth between languages whenever it was easier to explain something in one language over the other. Kristin, for example, described her experience at her grandparents' villa predominantly in Spanish, as it made sense to talk about her Spanish experience in Spanish instead of searching for the words in English to describe unique cultural phenomena. Code switching, as this is called, was a very common habit of students and teachers in the two-way immersion classes, and in fact all over Tove, languages were heard mixed and mingled with each other in conversations.

Teachers were specifically trained not to code-switch within a single sentence, as is often a natural tendency of bilingual people, but they would sometimes do it from sentence to sentence. For example, Mr. Gonzalez, the grade 1 two-way Spanish teacher was often heard saying to his class "Ok, everyone. Tranquilos, calmense." Ms. Simpson couldn't help smiling when her students entered her class after walking past Mr. Gonzalez' classroom, imitating this famous phrase in their best, deep teacherly voice. Code switching was a communication facilitator for Lenika and Kristin in their conversations, and as they each improved in their weaker language, their code switching became more and more complex.

Kristin's test had been in the morning a few weeks ago when she was at school. She heard her name over the intercom as she was discussing with Falah the easiest way to remember the 11 times-table in Arabic. The class had learned how to say the numbers in Arabic one afternoon, largely because Falah was one of the strongest in math so their teacher had had him teach numbers 1 through 10 to everyone. Kristin was called to the office where she met Marina, a language specialist who was to evaluate her abilities in Spanish. Marina greeted her in Spanish and explained that she was going to spend about an hour with her. Kristin smiled and they went to the library.

They talked about their summers and their hobbies and their favourite animals. Then they read a book and discussed alternative endings, and then they wrote a letter to an imaginary pen pal in Nicaragua who wanted to know all about Canada. The truth was, Kristin didn't even know that was her assessment until Marina told her she was going to switch to Ms.Simpson's class next week.

Marina wrote a formal report on Kristin's language ability, based on the exercises she had had her do. She assessed her oral comprehension and output, as well as her reading comprehension and her writing skills. Kristin made intelligent errors in Spanish, as was expected, and as did all the students in their second languages. They were based on her knowledge of English and Russian, and to Marina, a competent bilingual, they made perfect sense. Kristin understood her errors when Marina discussed them with her later. Kristin, her family, and Ms.Simpson were given a complete analysis of her language ability, as judged by Marina that Tuesday afternoon in October, and thus it was decided that she could handle the grade 5 two-way immersion programme at Tove. Kristin explained this to Lenika matter-of-factly as they sat bundled up under scarves and hats, swinging their legs on the bench in the playground over ham and cheese sandwiches.

Chapter Four

The next evening, Kristin was lying in bed trying to listen to her father and sister's conversation downstairs. It was hard to follow what they were saying. Not because they were speaking in Russian, but because they were downstairs. She was not actually interested in what they were *saying*, it was teachers' college talk again. Meghan was leaving in the morning to go back to London. Kristin liked having her sister home and it was always hard to go to bed the night before Meghan had to leave. She wanted to stay up and talk with her, she wanted to curl up in her pyjamas and slippers and read 'Me Llamó Laura' with her. She considered running into Meghan's room and hiding under her covers until she came to bed. But instead she lay in her own bed, straining her ears. The real reason Kristin liked

to listen in on their conversations was because of the language. Russian. She loved the sound of Russian. She longed to be fluent like her father. To speak real hybrid.

She played language games with herself a lot, especially when she was lying in bed but wasn't tired. She would wait until a thought came into her head, then she would stop it and whisper the language that the thought had been in. Then she would try and think the same thought in her other languages. Of course, the thoughts invariably came to her in English first. "*English*," she whispered. Then she switched to Russian and tried to think. Then to Spanish. She usually fell asleep after a few rounds.

Once she gave up on eavesdropping, and gave up on waiting for her sister to come upstairs, she drifted into a reverie about school. She was excited that she had switched to the two-way class, but she missed her other class too. She remembered her first day in Mrs. Francis' grade 5 English-medium class. She and her friend Melissa were the only native Anglophones in the class. Mrs. Francis was an African American who had moved up to Ontario a few years ago, after getting her BCLAD certification and completing the L2 year studies through correspondence at a university in New York. She was a native Anglophone, but spoke quite good Vietnamese, which she had studied for the past three years while teaching in New York. The six Vietnamese students in the class benefited immensely from this. The rest of the class was a mish-mash of ethnicities. There were Greek children, Urdu and Tamil speaking children, two Arabic speaking twins who, for whatever reason, did not go to Edwards Public School for two-way immersion, one Hungarian child, and one Tagalog speaker.

When everyone had found a desk, Mrs. Francis walked up to the chalkboard and wrote ENGLISH in block letters. Beside it she wrote VIETNAMESE in Vietnamese. Beside that she wrote FRENCH. Then she handed Dacia the chalk. "I speak English, Vietnamese, and French. What do you speak?" Dacia went up to the board and wrote in tidy Greek lettering GREEK. She looked at the teacher. Mrs. Francis told her to put a check beside the word English because she also spoke English. "But I don't really speak English," Dacia protested, in excellent English. Mrs. Francis laughed.

The children passed the chalk around until everyone had written their languages on the board. At the end, there were fourteen languages listed, and checkmarks sprinkled the board. Kristin could only read a few of the languages, as most of the lettering was not familiar to her. She sat back and gazed at the chalkboard. Wow, she thought, the kids in her class must be really smart.

Chapter Five

Maria Costa had decided that she didn't know enough about language policies and language acquisition, and she made up her mind to read about the subjects as much as she could. And, like her daughter, when she put her mind to something, she gave it a full effort.

That evening Maria took the kids to the library. The library, which had four floors, operated in a variety of languages. Postings were multilingual, and resources and staff were multilingual. Maria smiled when they entered the front doors because the first thing she noticed was an Indian family sitting by the window, the father balancing a small boy on his knee, reading a giant paperback book with a picture of three tigers on the cover and big red writing in Gujarati, and next to them on the window sill was a Chinese mother with a daughter on *her* knee. The two knee-kids were evidently more interested in each other than in the story with which their parents were trying to enthrall them. They kept looking across at each other and giggling.

The Spanish language section was on the second floor. Maria left her kids there, telling Angel to stay with his sister, and she went back downstairs to ask someone wearing a library vest where she could find the publications on the back of the LIP brochure she had brought. The boy took a look and told her to go to the education section on the fourth floor. Maria took the elevator up to the row the boy had indicated. Lenika and Angel eventually found her and showed her the stack of books they had each accumulated. She could barely see her little boy behind the collection in his arms, and her mouth curved into a smile.

A search, a bathroom trip, and a line-up later, the three of them were on their way home. Carlos was busy unpacking the boxes that had been sitting in the living room untouched for a few months now. It still didn't look like he had even dented the top of the pile of stuff to be sorted through and put away in their new house. He sneezed and asked if they had had any luck. Then he looked up and saw the bags they were carrying and laughed.

"Aha, I see." He gave Maria a kiss and told her he had had an interruption because the next door neighbour, Grant, had come over. Grant was a 30-something year old man with a mass of curly red hair atop his head. His wife, Susanna, and their three small children had lived in Ambury since their oldest son was born and Susanna was transferred to the hospital here where she was the head of family practice. Their twins were born only last year, and were a spitting image of Grant himself. It was the running joke in their family that Susanna was not represented in the faces of their children, as they all looked just like their father, without a trace of Susanna to be found anywhere. Of course, Susanna claimed that if the kids got Grant's looks, they must have gotten her brains. Stethoscopes and gauze made up a large proportion of the kids' playthings, after all. Their oldest boy, Matthew, was the same age as Angel and the two boys had been getting to know each other slowly.

Carlos turned back to the boxes. Another sneeze from the dust.

Over a potato omelette, Maria opened the first book she had borrowed from the library. It was entitled, "Porque Hablamos Español?"

Chapter Six

Meghan turned off her MP3 player as soon as she could see Dr.Collins' lips start to move. She loved going to his class. Of course, she hugely respected what he was teaching and researching, but the strikingly handsome Mohawk face and shiny black ponytail were secretly the reasons she never missed a class.

"And so!" he began, as if simply carrying on with the very same sentence he had left off with last week, "We know that teachers who lack *repertoire* lack the flexibility to respond to learners' needs. A teacher who knows only one way to teach a skill or concept has no backup options if he or she notices that some kids are not getting it. Teachers in multilingual settings need an expanded repertoire of teaching strategies for making abstract skills and concepts concrete, do they not? *Not only* must a teacher have alternative approaches for teaching a given concept, but the alternatives must address the unique linguistic and cultural needs of the students. The ability to *choose* from within one's repertoire depends on a sound understanding of how language and concepts are learned."

He drew a frog on the chalkboard. "Take for instance little Sammy who is learning English and he states, in a lesson on the natural habitats of frogs, that most frogs live in trees. *Do you*, as his teacher, accept little Sammy's response without comment, do you respond with positive reinforcement, do you correct him because you deem his response incorrect, do you probe to see if he has misunderstood the lesson, do you conclude that he said *tree* because that is the only word for natural habitats that he knows, and then you provide additional vocabulary in your response, do you conclude that little Sammy said *tree* because in his country the commonest frog is a tree frog and therefore the answer is correct (of course you would know this from your multicultural research to prepare this lesson), or do you decide that further instruction using pictures and visuals is needed to ensure that students are aware that frogs have several natural habitats and that the kids have the verbal skills to discuss them?" Meghan wasn't sure if this was a rhetorical question or not. Dr.Collins threw up his hands, "Teachers are researchers, my friends; teachers are researchers."

She thought she got his point. She nodded wisely, jotted down in her notebook – *teachers=researchers – need ‘repertoire’*. She would have to think about what exactly that meant. Meghan remembered one English teacher she had had in middle school who had been trained under the old system, and his class always proceeded in the same way. He would do a general lesson, then the students were told to read a section from the textbook, then they were to do the questions at the end of the chapter. That was it, class after class. Presently, she flipped to the back of the course pack to see if there were recommended further readings. There were.

Dr.Collins went on, “So, given the complexities of the relationships between language and culture and schooling, you might be wondering what you as individual teachers can do to make a difference. First!” He drew a large sloppy star on the black board, “You research yourselves and your own backgrounds. What are *your* perceptions and behaviours towards *bambinos* from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds? *YOU* are transmitters of culture and values.”

Chapter Seven

Early December and Maria Costa was busy outside in the backyard covering burlap over the shrubs they had planted. She wanted to be prepared for the infamous winters she had heard about long before moving here. She waved at her neighbour, Susanna, as she came down the steps of her back porch and walked over towards Maria. “We aren’t going to get snow for another month or so, that’s my prediction,” Susanna said as she put her thumb down on the string Maria was trying to tie into a knot. The Costas and the O’Sullivans did not have a fence dividing their two yards. There was a simple wire attached to a few posts. In the summer, Susanna told Maria, their climbing ivy would be all over the wire and the kids would have to be careful of bees. Then they got into a conversation about bees and which child was allergic to what. Speaking with Susanna was good practice for Maria, even though she was always nervous when she saw her because she was worried she wouldn’t know what her neighbour was saying. Sometimes, ashamedly, Maria even avoided Susanna.

Usually, however, Maria found that she could follow more of Susanna’s English than Grant’s or other Anglophones’. Still, they often came to an impasse and had to drop the topic. But part of the reason Maria enjoyed talking with Susanna was because it always seemed like Susanna was genuinely interested in what she was saying and was not just trying to be polite. Susanna, Maria knew, grew up in a household with immigrant parents, and perhaps that was part of the reason she was so interested in the Costas’ experience. After the discussion about allergies, there was a pause, and then Susanna blew

her nose and mumbled something about hoping she was not catching a cold. Then she asked Maria how Lenika was doing at Tove. Was she liking it better, learning English, learning Spanish?

“Oh yes. Yes,” Maria was searching for her words, conscious of how often she was saying um and uh. “It is *experiencia* more positiva. Lenika love it. Massew love it too!”

“Yes, he will. I am always amazed at the difference in English competency I see in Julia and Roberto’s little boy Felipe across the street, and some of the other boys in the neighbourhood who do not go to a LIP school. Have you met the Fontanas? They live around the corner on Bright? Well, they have a little boy a year older than Matty, like Julia and Roberto’s other son Martin, but he goes to Honey where Italian is not used at all in the school, even though there are a bunch of Italian kids who go there, and when I hear him talk compared to how Martin talks, and even compared to how much he *understands*, the difference really is remarkable. They are both only in grade 1, but already I can see a difference in their self-confidence too. Of course, I am sure there are many other factors contributing to each child’s success, but I just find it so strange that the child in the English-only environment is not learning English as well or as quickly as the boy in the bilingual programme where part of his day is in Italian.”

Maria lost her there. Susanna had sped up a bit when she got excited about the language issues, and now Maria was furrowing her brow. Susanna caught herself and apologized, but Maria didn’t want her to stop or to change subjects, especially because she had been learning more and more about these issues recently. She muttered something and raced to the back window through which she could see her kids playing a board game on the carpet in the living room. She motioned to Lenika.

Back on the lawn, Susanna smiled. Lenika brushed her hair from her eyes, then translated as best she could what Susanna was trying to say to Maria. Lenika was quite good at comprehension, and vocabulary around language issues was something she heard often enough to recognize many of the words. Once she understood, Maria could relate to what Susanna was saying. She remembered when she used to think that throwing her kids head first into the English-only policy at Honey Elementary was the best way for them to blossom linguistically and academically. She tried to explain to Susanna what she had learned through her experience with Lenika, and since then, what she had read up about in books and on-line at the library.

Lenika laboured away, trying to communicate her mother’s knowledge on how there is no direct relationship between exposure to English and achievement in English. All the concepts and skills learned in the child’s first language transfer to the second language, so the stronger a base in the first language, the easier it is to acquire the second. She added how even though little Matthew might lag behind in English at the beginning, if he studies in a bilingual programme, he will likely excel in

the long term, and be more proficient in his first language while also having acquired a second.

Because remember, before the age of five or so, children acquire a new language the same way a native speaker acquires it, and are not really second language learners at all! They are more comparable to native speakers.

Susanna nodded. Then Lenika started fidgeting with the burlap and Maria decided it was time to go in for dinner.

"Muy, uh, buono evening!" Susanna called to them.

Chapter Eight

Cheryl Simpson was trying to read. All was quiet in her kitchen and the clock ticking above the stove was constant and relaxing. However, as interesting as the book was, she kept reading and re-reading the same sentence over and over as her mind wandered to other places. Other places like Honey Elementary only a short five years ago.

"Ms.Simpson to the office please, Ms.Simpson." It was the Fosters. She knew it by Hart's tone over the intercom. She grabbed her stack of papers and headed for the office. Sure enough, seated as sternly as ever, Mr and Mrs English-Only themselves. Cold smiles all round, accompanied by the minimum required eye contact.

Hart began, "Cheryl, the Fosters have kindly made an appointment to discuss with me their concern that Billy and Jenny are being exposed to a policy in your class that they fear is alienating their children from their peers and classmates. Billy and Jenny hear a variety of languages being spoken in your classroom all day, such as Spanish by you and a couple of your students, and Indian by the Indian children in your class and Chinese by the Chinese students. Billy and Jenny do not understand any of these foreign languages, and having them floating around in their school environment every day is causing frustration to these two students and to their parents."

Mr. Foster cut in, "Now, please don't misunderstand. We are entirely in favour of these immigrants coming to Canada and contributing to our economy. We are not some nut cases who think this country should remain all white like it used to be, but when they come to Canada, they should have to follow our rules the same as everybody else. And this means speaking English at school. English is the most effective educational language, and guarantees a better future to our students." Ms.Simpson furrowed her brow. When, in Canadian history, was this country ever all white? And if English can guarantee language minorities a better future, then why do the majority of African-Americans, for

example, whose ancestors have spoken English for over two hundred years, find themselves still relegated to the ghettos?

She was about to ask these questions, when Mrs. Foster added in complete seriousness, "Yes, I mean, we are open to all different people. We eat at Chinese restaurants all the time."

Ms. Simpson almost choked at this, and blurted out before Mr. Hart could intercept, "Mrs. Foster, I'm afraid you may have a severely skewed impression of multiculturalism. The fact is, having your children exposed to a variety of ethnicities and languages could be seen as extremely beneficial for them. It has the potential to open their minds in ways that a monolingual environment cannot. They are meeting kids their own age from all over the world and are interacting with them. This allows them to learn about the ways of life in other countries, which in turn develops their thinking abilities and pushes them to consider ideas that would otherwise have been absent."

"But why," asked Mr. Foster, "do these foreigners insist on speaking their languages when it is clearly keeping them isolated from Canadian kids like Billy and Jenny? How do they expect to assimilate into our culture if they remain in their small language cliques?"

"Well, for one thing, many of these foreign students to whom you refer are in fact Canadian themselves. Being Canadian no longer automatically implies being a white Anglophone, as I am sure you are aware." The irony in her voice was glaring. "Many of Billy and Jenny's classmates who choose to communicate with each other in a language other than English are, in fact, Canadian born, some from Canadian born parents, and fluent in English as well as their home languages."

For another thing, I am not sure that many of our language minority parents would appreciate your assumption that their goal is to assimilate into Canadian culture. Some prefer to think of their adaptation process as *integration*. The difference is important, and it concerns the role of the dominant society. That's people like you and me. We can either embrace the millions of people living in Canada who do not fit the mould you are comfortable with, or we can make their life extremely difficult. If we choose the first path, then we must recognize that these children come to school with linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills different from what monolingual Anglophone children have. Their multilingualism is a valuable tool that schools like the Language Inclusive Policy schools try to utilize in order to promote bilingualism in everyone. Perhaps if you were to encourage your children to take an interest in the diversity at Honey then they might be able to pick up some of the languages spoken around them."

Hart, by this time, had shuffled over to take a stance beside Mr. Foster. He stood like a tower, arms folded across his chest, over the three, seated debaters in his office.

Mrs. Foster rolled her eyes, "It seems you have missed our point, Ms.Simpson. What my husband and I are trying to say is that there is no reason for this school to complicate the learning process for children like Billy and Jenny, who understand and function in English perfectly. Of course it would be nice if people from everywhere could just use whatever language they want, but that is just not the way it works. There is nothing that can be done about it. They have come to Canada, so they should be operating in English like the rest of us, instead of forcing their difficult and unfamiliar languages upon our children and our school systems. Our country is united by English."

"Do you not think it is perhaps the other way around, Mrs. Foster? Is it not, and has it not historically always been *we*, the dominant group members who force our language and culture upon others? No one is denying that language minority children need to learn English. In fact that is one of the principle goals of the LIP, at schools like Tove Elementary and Edwards Public School and Woodthorn Elementary. But what you clearly do not realize is that there is more than one way to educate language minorities. Allowing them to learn English with the help of their first language has shown far better results in many studies around the world than have programmes where they are thrown into a new language without offering a hint of the language with which they are already familiar.

"And also, you say they need to be operating in English like the rest of us, but I am afraid your wording is inaccurate, for not all of *us* operate in English. I myself divide much of my day between two, sometimes three languages, and if you visit other parts of the city, let alone other parts of the country, people are functioning in multiple languages all the time. Worldwide, it is a *minority* who speak only one language. In Canada, there are many Anglophones who have learned another language and who use it in their daily routines consistently. French, Mandarin, Italian, Arabic, Ukrainian, and many others, not to mention the Native peoples' languages, are languages that have firm roots in Canada and very large populations who communicate in them sometimes exclusively!

"Language is personal. There are infinite varieties, hybrids, fusions and endless ways of languaging, crossing language boundaries, beyond words and finite linguistic systems, incorporating multi-modal ways of representation, all of which not only have the legitimacy to exist and co-exist but together contribute to the wealth of the land. Making everybody adopt the same hegemonic language is not considered inclusion. A multiplicity of languages implies multiple routes and avenues of communication between and among people in diverse contexts. This is what brings respect and efficiency to personal choices."

Ms.Simpson paused here and considered briefly going into the explanation of common underlying proficiency. She decided against it and instead thought she might try getting the Fosters to put themselves in the shoes of some of her language minority students. It was sometimes hard, she

knew, for members of the dominant culture to understand the position of newcomers to Canada. It was sometimes difficult for people who had never been significantly exposed to anything but the dominant culture to understand the troubles and difficulties that marginalized people might face.

"Yes, yes, Cheryl," Mr. Hart interrupted. He was looking uncomfortable. "I'm sure the Fosters have put themselves in the shoes of the minority children many times before. We all want them to feel comfortable."

Ms. Simpson jumped right back in. "Do you know what *de facto* policy is?" She was looking directly at the couple sitting in front of her. They responded with blank stares. "De facto policy is the policy that actually *exists*. It is the way things operate, regardless of the officially stated policy, laws, documents, intentions, whatever. Dan says that the policy here allows students to speak the language they choose because it is not officially written that they are forbidden to do so. But can this policy actually take place if all the learning materials are in English only, and the tests! Shall I even begin about the tests! No matter what you say, if the children are not yet proficient in the English language, they are severely penalized because all the testing material is in English. This is the de facto policy. Operate in English only or else you will be made to fail."

"But you yourself said a minute ago that you want the immigrants to learn English."

"Yes, *of course*. They must and they do. But seeing as it takes at least 5 and sometimes as many as 10 years to master a new language to be competent academically, should we not be making every effort possible in order to help these children demonstrate what they *do* know? We need to be giving them a chance to prove their knowledge and comprehension of the subject matter, just like we give the Anglophones, and if that means allowing them to use their first language as a learning aid in the classroom, then by all means we need to encourage this.

If we do not, if we continue to operate under the de facto policy of English only, then we are telling the minority children that everything they have already learned in their home countries is worthless. Worthless unless they know it in English. And we are not allowing them to demonstrate the full range of their competences. Such a policy keeps the minority children in a powerless position compared to children like Billy and Jenny who sail right through and will eventually go on to higher studies. School is meant to *empower* students. All students. Regardless of whether they learned English first or not."

Chapter Nine

Amber picked up the phone in her cubicle, "Amber MacDonald."

"Amber, it's Cheryl." Ms. Simpson was in tears.

"Cheryl, what's going on? Aren't you in class?"

"It's lunch."

Amber turned and looked at the clock on her phone. Indeed it was lunch. "Are you ok?"

"No. I sent in my resignation this morning."

"What?! You *quit*!?"

Sob. "Yes." Sob. "I can't do it any more, Amb, I can't be a part of keeping these kids at the bottom of the ladder."

"What are you talking about? What kids?"

"The kids in my class. The ones who are learning English but through this horrible system where they study ESL for a few hours a week with Johnson and his fill-in-the-blanks and are expected to meet the standard that the born-Anglos meet. And I am expected to teach them with only English materials and English language activities, without a trace of the world that they understand and relate to, and Hart breathes down my neck to make sure I'm doing that. You have no idea how many times I am called down to the office each week. And these poor kids' self-image is deteriorating in the face of their dominant group peers. And at the same time I am supposed to teach the Anglophone kids, and make the material challenging for them, so obviously I am juggling a million different levels of English proficiency and have no language learning aids, nothing! It is a system that doesn't work, and how can I go on in it when I know that there are LIP schools that have it set up *right*. Where everything that the kids know, all their linguistic and cultural capital, gets acknowledged and valued and everyone gets to learn about the different perspectives existing in their classroom."

"Ya to be honest Cher I thought you would have gone to a LIP school a lot sooner than this. I couldn't believe you even took the job at Honey after you did your L2 year and everything."

"I know. I guess I just figured I could learn a lot by working there. Honey was the first job that opened up when I got back from Costa Rica and I knew the LIP schools were gaining momentum, and that I could go to one if I wanted to. But Ambury doesn't have Spanish two-way yet. Besides, my first year at Honey, even my second year, was good. I loved the kids and I was able to do what I wanted within the walls of my own classroom. It wasn't until the parents of these two kids in my class, brother and sister, started complaining to Hart that I was *confusing* their kids by teaching multiculturally like I was. That's when Hart started to keep tabs on me and limit everything I did in the classroom to English-only. All my materials, everything I assigned as projects, *everything*. It's been awful. The

kids are still great, of course, but it is breaking my heart to see them oppressed under this system and language policy.”

“So what are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. Finish the year and then maybe go to Toronto or London.”

“Your L2 year was in Spanish,” Amber confirmed.

“Mhm. I went to Bolivia for the semester abroad, remember?”

“Oh right. Your emails were hilarious! So how is the English-medium option different, again?”

“Well in the L2 year you choose between doing a language focus or doing English-medium focus. If you do a language focus then you pick a language that you have a basic knowledge of, and you are expected to study it intensively to attain a certain level of proficiency by the end of the 12 months, with the help of a semester abroad. Most students develop pretty good BICS, I mean, language enough to communicate in every day.”

“I know what BICS are, Cheryl.”

“Of course, sorry. So seeing as most of the pre-service teachers who choose a language focus already have a pretty strong base in their language, it is usually not hard to come away bilingual. In fact, some *go into* the L2 year already bilingual, but they don’t have to take the language classes, they go to the Cultural Awareness classes. Anyway, if you do the English-medium focus then you study a bunch of different languages in little mini-units. Obviously you don’t really get very far in any of them, but you learn the basics and the workings of the language. How they are set up, what writing systems they use, their histories, and you know, the cultures they represent.

“Also you look at *how* to teach to a class full of kids from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A woman in my year said that was definitely the most important part, she found. Learning what it was like to be a language minority student, and studying a lot of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, experiential learning. That was the focus, apart from looking at the languages themselves. Looking at what it takes to be a good teacher in a Canadian classroom, a classroom that is likely to be extremely diverse. Well, in a lot of parts of the country anyhow.”

“And where it is not diverse in the classroom, well, it is important for the teacher to know how to teach in a culturally sensitive way *anyways*, because if not then those dominant group kids won’t be adequately prepared to go out into the greater world that *is* diverse.”

“Exactly. Especially when the curriculum is still so geared towards spreading the dominant group values and beliefs. Luckily this is changing, as more and more qualified teachers are gaining influence in curricula and policy.”

"Mhm."

"Oh, I better get going, bell's going to ring. Thanks for talking... listening?"

Amber laughed, and brought her crossed heels down off her desk. "No problem, Cher. Call me later."

"Hm," Ms. Simpson smiled, "Take care."

"Bye."

Chapter Ten

Lenika and Felipe walked home from school together on Wednesday. They had been walking home together since Lenika switched, and the first time they had taken far longer than both their parents had expected. In fact, about an hour after the time school was let out, Julia had called Maria to see if Felipe had ended up at the Costas' house. But no, he hadn't, and no, Lenika had not ended up at the Covas Marcos' house. And so the parents waited. And waited. When they finally walked through their respective front doors, the children clearly had some explaining to do. As Maria and Carlos and Julia and Roberto had somewhat expected, the pair of them had not even realized they were dawdling or taking an absurdly long time to reach their destination. They had, the parents learned, stopped to play at the library play-ground, and then had taken Haddon street instead of Mulberry, which winds around behind the park, so that they could stop to feed the ducks. Felipe had a quarter in his pocket and they bought feed from the machine and there was one white goose who came right up and ate out of her hands, Lenika recounted to her parents, wide-eyed. Maria listened with her arms folded disapprovingly in front of her chest, eyebrows raised. Her daughter recognized the look and fidgeted as she explained and avoided eye contact.

Across the street in the Covas Marcos household, Felipe was strictly being told to, "Come straight home next time, please, because it gets dark early now and we don't want you two meandering along in the dark." Felipe nodded, crossing his fingers behind his back that his father was not going to make Juana meet them to walk home.

"Maybe I should ask Juana to meet you two and walk home with you." Felipe pouted. "What do you think?" Felipe shook his head. "Will you come straight home from now on, and call us if you are going to stop somewhere?"

"Bueno."

"Esta bien." Felipe ran into the family room to play with Martin. Roberto smiled at Julia. Their son was pretty adorable, after all.

And so it was that the next day Lenika and Felipe shuffled down Mulberry street without so much as a glance at the library jungle gym.

"I want to learn French," Felipe announced, swinging his lunch box as far as his arm could stretch. This made Lenika think of Jenny from her class at Honey Elementary. She had over-heard her talking with Becky one day on the playground. Jenny was explaining that her parents thought the programme at Tove was useless because learning bilingually would never be as effective for English learners as being immersed only in English, and that the French immersion programme was perfect proof.

"Do you think French immersion is better than our two-way immersion at Tove?" she asked Felipe.

"No cause the kids who go to French immersion didn't move here from another country like us. They're Anglos."

"But a girl in my class at Honey said that her dad said that French immersion was proof that the best way to learn a new language is by being thrown into it a hundred percent. That would mean that it is best if we were thrown into English a hundred percent, but we're not at Tove cause Ms.Simpson does half the day in Spanish and there is so much other languages everywhere."

"Si, it's totally different."

Lenika went into her kitchen where her parents were having coffee and looking through the newspapers, Carlos equipped with his dictionaries, comparing stories across the two languages, as usual.

"Hola Lenikita, how was your day?" he asked.

"Papá, is school like French immersion better for learning a new language? Isn't it proof that complete surroundings in English is better for me?"

"But Lenika, you know it isn't because you tried that at Honey."

"Why does it work for French immersion kids and why does Jenny and Billy's dad say it's the best proof?"

Maria had the answer. She had read, but also talked about it with friends of Luis' in Toronto who had a son in French immersion. "Querida, first of all, French immersion in Ontario, say, is a programme designed for members of the dominant culture group (Anglos), and therefore their assimilation into another linguistic or cultural group is by choice rather than because of political or economical necessity, as it is for most minority language speakers like us. And, students in French

immersion are *not* surrounded 100% by French. They live in a society that values their first language, English, and there is no risk of them losing touch with this language. At school, they receive most instruction in French, but they still have some classes in English like Phys-ed and music. In effect, French immersion is *bilingual* education. Also, their teachers are bilinguals who can, if necessary, speak to the kids in their first language. Although the teachers only address their students in French, they understand and respond appropriately to the students when they speak in English. This can't happen for minority language kids whose teachers are not fluent in their first language. Except, of course, in a programme like the one at Tove, where teachers are trained in second languages.

"Usually, all the children in the French immersion classes share the same first language, which is the culturally dominant language, and so their heritage and culture are accepted as the norm and promoted and the kids are never made to feel ashamed of it. The environment of the school is in English, too, Lenika, and there are always resources and speakers of English all around them to help them learn. Therefore, these children's first language continues to develop and be maintained even while a second language is being learned. This is called *additive bilingualism*," Maria looked at her husband, wondering if he would be impressed with her knowledge on the subject. "This is where a second language is added to the person's language abilities without any loss to the first language. This is not how it usually goes for minority language speakers. For many immigrants, the learning of the dominant language is accompanied by a *loss* of their first language. This is called *subtractive bilingualism* and it is what I do not want to see happen to you or Angel. Which is partly the reason we decided to switch you to a school with a Language Inclusive Policy.

"What Jenny and Billy's father is saying is quite commonly used as an argument against bilingual education programmes. They look at the results from French immersion and say well, after all, French immersion children are educated in a second language and they succeed academically! But of course this argument is overlooking many factors. There is absolutely no comparison that is fair to make between Anglophone kids in Ontario who go to French immersion and immigrant kids who are thrown into an all-English environment."

Carlos looked up at the two of them, "It's like saying that since cows can live off of grass and corn, that all animals should only eat grass and corn."

Lenika giggled at the thought of this and bounced off to the family room where her brother was waiting to play.

Chapter Eleven

One of the most important aspects of the LIP schools' design is that the material learned in one language in the morning was reinforced in the other language as much as possible in the afternoon. Cheryl Simpson, being the conscientious teacher that she was, kept careful track of what concepts were discussed in what language throughout the week, and then on Friday she did a review of whatever had been missed in either language. She knew that *literacy* had to be taught in *both* languages, so that one language didn't develop in the students only to a conversational level and the other to an academic level.

On this snowy Friday, Ms. Simpson realized that earlier in the week the class had looked at the solar system in Spanish because they were taking a class-trip to the planetarium in the spring and she wanted to see what level the students were at in order to plan the unit. She had no idea what they might know or not know already, and so they had spent Wednesday morning talking about stars and planets in Spanish. She suddenly remembered that she had intended to go over the concepts again the next morning in English, but one thing led to another and quite unexpectedly they ended up in a very serious discussion about homosexuality. After that, Ms. Simpson had allowed her kids to play for the remaining 20 minutes of the morning, instead of trying to divert their attention to the solar system after such an important and heavy talk.

And so here on Friday, she figured it would be a good idea to talk about the solar system with the children in English so that she could get a feel for where they were at in the other language. This cross-linguistic checking was very important to do because the kids who had the vocabulary in one language shone during one half of the discussion, and then the kids who had the vocabulary in the other language shone during the other half of the discussion. Thus, the children of both linguistic fortes learned how to express what they knew in their weaker language. If she never did the other half of the discussion then she never saw the knowledge level of the kids who were the second language learners the first time through.

She stuck her giant plastic sun up on the board. So far so good, everyone chimed out 'sun!'. So she proceeded with the rest of her plastic pictures and loved hearing the Spanish kids attempt translations for the names of the planets. Often they were quite close and simply had to alter a letter or two to match the words their Anglophone counterparts were saying. She realized at that moment that one of the reasons she loved teaching in a bilingual programme was because she could see first hand that as her students developed their two languages, they were gaining *two* vessels for comprehending a given subject. With every language you acquire, you gain a new way of thinking about the world. New eyes. New ears. A new light.

The class was remarkably focused for a Friday. Ms.Simpson sat with her students in a circle on the carpet. Outside, the snow was falling and the world was still. She couldn't help but notice that the weather was mirrored in her students' demeanour. They were calm, pensive, and comfortable. An overwhelming sense of happiness engulfed her that afternoon as she sat with her little buddies in the classroom they had made home. They all took off their shoes, as was the custom when they sat on the carpet, a custom that was started by a little girl named Akiko in Mrs.Yamamoto's English-medium class. She was Japanese, and she had told her teacher that her family always took off their shoes when they went into the house, and that they had separate slippers to put on when they went into the bathroom. Mrs.Yamamoto told Ms.Simpson about the first time she noticed that Akiko had slipped off her shoes to sit on the carpet. When she noticed, she asked her to tell the class about this custom, and Akiko had explained that when she went to visit her grandparents' house in Japan, there were tatami mats and you only walked on them with socks or barefoot. When Akiko had finished talking, the class was silent for a moment, and then all of a sudden everyone started taking off their shoes.

Mrs.Yamamoto, of course, did so too, and it touched her in such a beautiful way because she herself was of Japanese descent, although she was born in Canada. It touched her because it was like she had found a small link to her own heritage in this girl. From that day on, Mrs.Yamamoto's class always removed their shoes before they sat on the carpet. When Ms.Simpson heard this story, she immediately asked if Akiko would come to her class during a cultural awareness lesson one day and teach her students about this custom in her country. Akiko was shy, but she agreed. Ms.Simpson's students were very receptive, and they appreciated the idea of removing their shoes when they sat on the carpet. And so the tradition spread.

As the class was getting ready for their reading lesson on the carpet, Ms.Simpson could hear Angela humming a song as she was putting away her markers. It was a song that Ms.Simpson recognized from the time she spent living in South America, and knew that many of the children would know it if they heard Angela singing. She waited. Soon enough, Carla caught on and started humming along with Angela. Ms.Simpson still said nothing. She knew where this was going, and sure enough, after a minute or so, all the Spanish speakers were singing at the top of their lungs. Most of the Anglophone students did not know the words but they listened and after a couple times around, they were able to join in the chorus. Then Ms.Simpson saw Lenika pick up a piece of chalk and start scribbling down the words on the chalk board for Kristin to follow. Nobody appeared to care whether the teacher had noticed or not, until Mr. Wallace popped his head in the door to see what was going on. Then everyone burst out laughing. Yes, report cards were due soon and Ms.Simpson knew she had to work in a language evaluation at some point for her students. But today was not the day. Today was a

day for music and laughter. And outside the snowflakes floated to the ground, swirling and twirling, just like the little snowflakes in the grade 5 classroom.

Chapter Thirteen

The red light flashed on Adila Gul-Chehra's phone, indicating that Javi was forwarding her a call. She pushed the button to speak to him first, "Who is it, Javi?"

"A Mrs. Nedim. Wants to speak with you about employment opportunities. Shall I make her an appointment?"

"No I can take it now. Language?"

"Arabic."

"Gracias." She pushed another button. "Merhaba. Adila Gul-Chehra," she said as she crammed the phone between her right ear and right shoulder. She was signing report cards. The woman on the other end spoke to her in an Arabic she immediately recognized as Kuwaiti.

"Yes, hello, my name is Havva and I am a new immigrant from Kuwait."

"Hello."

"I have a question regarding teaching qualifications in the Language Inclusive Programme schools. I am a qualified teacher in Kuwait and have been teaching math and science to intermediate level school children for nearly 17 years. I began in elementary, then moved to grades 6 to 8. I am very interested in continuing my teaching here in Canada and I was wondering what the procedure is in terms of application."

"It is fairly simple. All qualified teachers from foreign countries, just the same as doctors and others, must take a one-year training course before they are eligible to apply to Canadian schools. This is just to cover cultural particularities, differences between practices in the two countries. For the LIP schools, there is an additional one year required which you would do along side all the students in their third year of teachers' college. We call it the L2 year and it focuses on specific skills needed to be a teacher in a linguistically diverse classroom. Now, the one-year training for qualified immigrants is covered by the government, so all you need to do is go on-line and register at a college or university nearby (I believe the Ontario Institute for Higher Education might offer the programme for teachers here in Ambury, but definitely all the colleges in London do). The L2 year will cost regular tuition, but there is a bursary offered that you can apply for."

"I see." The woman was writing everything down. "And my daughter who is a graduate from university in Kuwait but has not begun working yet, she would also like to become a teacher. Are there any opportunities for her?"

"Well, one of our LIP schools, Edwards Public School, offers Arabic as a two-way immersion option. But the other two that don't, us and Woodthorn, we always need community members willing to work as language support staff. They are paid, and it is an excellent opportunity to get classroom experience before she begins teachers' college. It would involve spending two hours every day with a small group of children who speak Arabic as a first language. She would work with them on classroom material given by the teacher in Arabic, as well as play games with them, read with them, talk with them about various academic topics, etc. It is very important for language minority children to receive primary language instruction while they are learning English, and this is the LIP solution to providing such instruction to kids of so many language backgrounds."

"Mhm. I see. So I will tell my daughter to speak to you or Woodthorn regarding the language assistant positions."

"That's right. I am just checking... to see... aha, yes, we are in fact looking for an Arabic speaker at the moment. If your daughter is interested, she will need to make an appointment to come and meet with me. She should bring her resume." The woman sounded delighted. She thanked the principal about ten times, then hung up. Mrs. Gul-Chehra put the phone down, cracked her knuckles, and picked up the pen again to move onto the grade 3 stack of report cards.

Chapter Fourteen

Querida Elisa,

School is much better now! Now I go to a LIP school (that stands for something but I forget. I think it is 'Learning Inglés...' or something) and I get to study in Spanish and English. It's better because I am learning English but still get to read and talk in Spanish with my friends! And I have made some friends named Kristin and Felipe. Nathan is also my friend. And Carla is my friend too but we only play at recess together. And I am still friends with Mercedes from my old school. I can run faster than Carla and I know where she always hides because she found me one day

behind the garbage bin and then she went there right after and now I always catch her. I really like school now and I had only 3 'Needs Improvement's on my report card and they were in Spanish writing, English reading, and music. I didn't practice my music routine with Kristin because her recorder broke so we both got a 'Needs Improvement'. Yesterday I got to volunteer again in Mr. Tremblay's class. It is not a two-way like mine, because it is filled with kids from everywhere in the world! One girl is even from Japan, which is on the other side of the world. She said the airplane took 13 hours! That's a lot longer than our airplane. She must have watched about 20 movies. I am going to go there one day and she said I could. When I volunteer there I go in the morning when it's English and I help the little kids with their projects. There is one girl named Alice who only speaks English and nothing else! Ms.Simpson says that being bilingual makes you smarter. Alice is really nice so I didn't tell her that. But Ms.Simpson says that there is a lot of evidence that kids who can read in more than one language have a bunch of *intellectual advantages*. That is kind of like a special power where you know more things and you're really smart. I always knew I had *intellectual advantages* because once when I was little mamá didn't know where her pin with the dragon head on it was and I knew it was in the kitchen cupboard. I just knew without even having to think! But Ms.Simpson says that bilinguals can be better readers than monolinguals, and we have more creativity and can solve problems better and things like that. This is because we have more than one way of thinking. We can think in two ways. Like the other day on the bus when the person was reading a book in Russian and Kristin's sister Meghan said she knew what the book was called. I didn't know because I don't speak Russian yet. Ms.Simpson calls this 'social capital' but I already know that the capital is Ottawa just like that time back home when we went to the capital with uncle Jose and then when the teacher asked us what the capital was I knew cause we just went. I don't really know why Ms.Simpson says that we have 'social capital' but I liked it when she said that we might earn more money and have more careers! I am going to be an astronaut like the one that went into outer space. I saw a picture of him. That's why I'm practicing my timetables really hard every night. You have to have them memorized to be an astronaut. When I went to Honey Elementary, I didn't know what I wanted to be. Back home I

thought I would be a teacher like mamá but when I got here I realized that would be impossible for me because there were other kids like Jenny and Becky who were going to be teachers and the teacher liked them better so they would be teachers but I couldn't. But now I think I could.

Besitos,

Lenika

"So what did you write to your cousin?" Maria walked into the kitchen where Lenika was licking the envelope closed.

"I told her about what Ms.Simpson said about bilinguals having intellectual advantages like me."

The corners of Maria's mouth turned up in a smile. "Oh! What else did your teacher say?"

"She said that people have studied bilinguals before and we are smarter."

"Well, it's not quite as simple as that, but I know what she means. I have read some of the studies she is talking about, and what she means is that there are many advantages that bilinguals have in lots of different domains, like cultural and social and academic and economical. Like for example a lot of bilingual kids out perform monolingual kids in the long term in *both* languages. Bilingual kids have heightened problem-solving skills, analytical skills and creativity because they have more than one way of thinking about a concept, they are more divergent thinkers. So perhaps you might not realize it right away, and the struggle at the beginning to learn the language initially can be long and hard, indeed there can be no bilingualism without frustration but in the long run, I mean, long term, results for kids who can think in more than one language turn out to be higher in reading and writing. You can't separate learning a language from learning other aspects of your development." Lenika looked confused. "What I mean is that learning a language is intimately linked to, constrained by, and a contributor to cognitive and social development."

"Mamá, you're way too into this politica del lenguaje stuff." And with that, Lenika bounced off to find a stamp. Maria laughed, and then poured herself a cup of coffee.

Chapter Fifteen

One morning when the children were beginning to get excited for the up-coming winter break, Ms.Simpson decided to throw another log on the fire. She had had dinner with the Wallaces the night before and Ted had talked to her about a code-switching pattern that she had not heard of. It was called the New Concurrent Approach and it suggested using a carefully planned and structured form of code-switching in the classroom for delivery of content instruction. Code switching is linguistically coherent but could be considered pedagogically random because the switches a bilingual speaker may make in everyday conversation might not necessarily be effective for language development or the teaching of the subject matter.

Usually, code-switching was not done in the two-way classrooms, for a variety of reasons. For one thing, it can be strenuous and exhausting for teachers to do, and the students often quickly learned to tune out the language they felt weaker in and just wait for the information in the language they understood better. Of course, if done effectively, like Ms.Simpson was going to attempt this December morning, then code-switching would not just be a form of direct translation, but rather an instructional tool used to reinforce and review the lesson material. This particular model of code-switching was used for lexical enrichment. That is, to give all the students the vocabulary necessary to discuss the subject in both languages. She could foresee it making a lot of sense because it would allow the children to learn about specific cultural subjects in the appropriate language. Like she always said, a samurai village is best described in Japanese!

“Good morning my friends,” she sang to the little heads that were taking an especially long time to quiet down. “How long until winter break?” she asked, and immediately 20 arms shot into the air accompanied by 20 eager faces. She handed Felipe a marker and he strutted proudly over to the enormous calendar on the wall and crossed off yesterday’s date. This was the morning ritual, and each month Ms.Simpson was very careful to ask every student once to cross off a square. The kids never caught on that they got only one day a month to perform this task, as was evident by the 20 arms that were in the air every single morning. Luckily, she knew from experience to cross off Saturday and Sunday herself before she left on Friday.

“Si, faltan solamente trece dias,” she said, anticipating the usual chorus of correction.

“English, Ms.Simpson!”

But this morning she did not listen. “Today we are going to try something new,” she told them. “We are going to talk in both Spanish and English for the whole day.” The little faces stared up at her and some got excited. Nathan cheered. “That’s right. For today’s lesson we will talk about cooking in both languages. Entonces, que les gusta cocinar? Tamara?”

“Los huevos.”

“Y como los haces?”

“Scrambled.”

Ms.Simpson remembered that part of this technique was to be sure not to code-switch within a single sentence, as was the natural tendency, but to finish an idea in one language and then reinforce it in the other. “So Tamara likes to make scrambled eggs. Does anyone else make eggs for breakfast? Lenika?”

“Yes. I make tortilla.”

“Lenika makes omelettes. How do you make an omelette, Lenika?”

“First put a egg in a bowl and a cebolla and little salt and mix and put in hot plate.”

“Muy bien. Hay otra cosa que se puede añadir a la tortilla aparte de las cebollas?”

The task she assigned them for this frosty morning was to write out their favourite recipe and decorate the page so she could staple them all together like a recipe book. Like many of the projects her class produced, the recipes would surely be done bilingually. With the children set to work, Ms.Simpson’s mind wandered as she remembered a similar activity she had done with her class the year before.

The grammar that especially the native Spanish speaking children used showed the hybridity of the language, as the syntax and grammar were often in English while the vocabulary was largely in Spanish. But the mixture of the languages made the text very comprehensible. The languages complement each other, which is part of the beauty of being bilingual, she thought. If only she could speak all the languages of the world, she would always know the most beautiful and eloquent way of expressing her every idea and emotion. She thought of Mrs.Gul-Chehra and how she must never be at a loss for words! She loved seeing the way her bilingual students showed their ability to draw on both their languages to construct the text and to convey meaning.

Chapter Sixteen

The snow began one evening in December. Lenika was in the kitchen helping her brother with his activity for English class at the Centro. Maria and Carlos had enrolled him in the winter session because Martin across the street was going too, although they were in different classes. Angel’s teacher was a young man who had moved up to Ontario from Florida with his family when he was a teenager. They were Cuban, and his father was a solemn, mysterious man of about 60 who didn’t laugh much and who seemed to have been through some terrible events and was hiding them in his

dark eyes. He frightened Angel, although he had only ever made an appearance once at the Centro since Angel had been attending. It was in a class at the very beginning. Mario, the teacher, was going through a lesson on the weather outside when the solid strong figure walked through the classroom door and placed a stack of books on Mario's desk. He turned and looked at the class and seemed to move his paralysing stare from one child to the next for what felt like a decade. When he was finished looking at everyone, he abruptly took the two large strides to the door and vanished.

"That was my father," Mario said. His comment met a classroom full of frozen faces and terrified eyes. He chuckled. "He's not that bad."

The homework that Angel was assigned this particular week was along the lines of a science experiment. Mario had told the class to make a list of ten things in their home that had seeds. They had to choose one thing (and get permission, of course) to bring in to class the next week. Angel was having the most luck in the kitchen. He sat at the table with his marker in hand as his sister rummaged through the fridge and cupboards, calling out anything she could find that might possibly have seeds. When she found something, he would run up and inspect it himself to be sure it did, indeed, have seeds. Then he would run back to the table and write down the word in English. Usually he had to look it up in the dictionary, and at that point Lenika would be the one to run down to the table and help him with the gigantic book of which Angel could barely lift the pages.

Suddenly, as they were both buried in the cereal cupboard below the counter, investigating each cereal carefully for any sign of seeds, they heard their father call to them from the living room.

Lenika groaned, "Andate, Angel," as she tried to squeeze herself away from the cupboard without entirely knocking over her little brother, who was also trying to squeeze himself out. They ran into the living room where Maria and Carlos were standing looking out the window. When the children saw the snow, they gasped. It was coming down in big fluffy flakes and had already made a thin layer over the entire back yard. The wind was blowing slightly, and this made the clusters fall diagonally. Sometimes they would land on the branches of the naked maple tree, and sometimes on the roof of the shed.

"It looks like icing sugar," Angel said.

"It's so *white*," Lenika said. She asked if she could take a picture but there was no film in the camera, Carlos told her, and they had already returned the digital camera that the O'Sullivan's had lent them last week. But don't worry, there would be lots more snow.

The 22nd finally arrived, and with it the winter break. As school was let out, Lenika unexpectedly got a feeling she hadn't felt before in Canada. She was hugging Kristin goodbye and all

of a sudden she knew she was going to miss her over their two weeks apart. The Costas were going to Toronto to visit Luis and Carmen and Elisa for half of the break, and for the other half Kristin and her family would be in London with Meghan. This would be the first time since Lenika had started at Tove that she and Kristin would be apart for more than a weekend.

Lenika walked home from school swinging her lunch bag and only half-listening to Felipe rattle on in her ear. She was thinking about how that was the first time she had felt like she would miss something or someone from her new life. She thought about Ana. She always missed Ana. She thought about Milo, the dog they had adopted from uncle Jose when she was little. She thought about grandma and grandpa a lot, and about her old house. And now she was thinking about Kristin.

“Sabes? *Bigger* than the Marché Cinéma!” Felipe exclaimed.

“Hm?”

“Estas escuchando?”

They had reached Felipe’s house and Lenika invited herself in for a hot chocolate. Julia Covas Marcos was happy to see her and she asked when they were leaving for Toronto. Then she was summoned upstairs by Juana. After the hot chocolate Lenika told her friend that she had to get home because they were leaving in the morning. Felipe hugged her and told her he would miss her.

The winter break came and left and the Costa family was sure that they learned more about Canadian culture in those two weeks than they had altogether up until then. There were winter activities to enjoy, there was New Year’s in Nathan Phillips Square, and best of all, there was maple syrup. Lenika and Angel quickly became addicted, and there was no limit to the fuss they would cause every time they passed a little hut selling maple sugar leaves and *tire sur la neige*. The best was the maple flavoured cotton candy. They had cotton candy back home but it was always a florescent pink or blue. This was the first time they had seen it the golden colour of maple syrup. Maria found herself constantly telling her children to brush their teeth or rinse the sugar off their fingers or hair or coats.

Elisa enjoyed the Costas’ visit enormously. She was so impressed with how much her cousins had changed, how much English they had learned! Lenika, she said, was far more advanced than she had been after only five months. She was already able to follow conversations quite well, and when someone asked her a question she was able to deduce the meaning more often than not. There was still, of course, a lot of translating to be done on Elisa’s part, but she didn’t mind that at all. She was just so impressed and couldn’t stop gloating about her little cousin every time they went somewhere together.

For Angel, the best part of the winter break, of course, was his birthday. They were still in Ambury on the 21st, and Maria and Carlos had arranged a party for their family, the Covas Marcos’ and

the O'Sullivans. Everyone contributed something to the pot luck, and the resulting feast was a combination of Mexican food, Italian food, and two of Angel's favourite desserts from back home. Lenika had spent a chunk of her savings out of her piggy bank to buy him a bell for his bike. She told him she knew he couldn't use it until spring, but at least he would have one for as soon as the snow melted. And, of course, for as soon as he got a new bike. Both the children had had to leave their bicycles back home, but Lenika lucked out when they arrived in Toronto because Elisa had an old one she had let her take. Lenika's birthday was not until June, and she knew she would have to get a bell for her own bike before then. She counted the months on her fingers and concluded she had ample time to save up for a bell for herself before springtime.

Eventually January fourth arrived and the festivities drew to an end. On Monday morning Lenika arose, put on her new turtle-neck sweater, and went to make her lunch in the kitchen. She had slept in a little, and Maria laughed as she pointed out the pillow marks across her forehead.

"You get to see Kristin today," Maria said to her daughter who was carefully injecting hummus into a pita bread.

"Mhm," she nodded wildly and then had to drag a curl or two out of the pita as her hair was not pinned back yet. Lenika was excited, Maria could plainly see, and as she watched her put her shoes on and zip up her coat for the walk to school, Maria felt overjoyed that at last her daughter truly was adapting, and the Lenika she knew back home had come alive again.

Chapter Seventeen

The first thing Meghan did when she was back in London after the winter holidays was call France to find out how her L2 year application had gone. France was from New Liskeard, Ontario and had spent her three weeks off on her family's farm. Her brother and sister were both back from their respective schools for the break and when Meghan spoke to her friend on Christmas day, it sounded like she was as happy as a cricket. Now back in London, the two of them knew they had to get down to work because finals would be fast approaching. Meghan invited France over to her apartment for dinner on Thursday evening.

When France arrived, Meghan noticed right away that she looked rested and revitalized. She had had a tough end of semester before the break because of her jam-packed course load, and Meghan was happy to see that life and colour had returned to her cheeks. She took off her coat and boots and scarf and went into the kitchen to say hello to Anke. The three of them put their heads together to

figure out what to make for dinner, and finally decided they would make pizzas because Meghan had some dough for crust in the freezer that she had made a few weeks ago. They took it out and as it softened they cut up all the veggies they could find in the fridge, and grated cheese. Not long after, the pizza was in the oven and the girls were setting the table. They chatted about this and that, which family members had made a scene at which family event, which cousin was pregnant now, which friend of whose had done what at which new year's party, and in Anke's case, which relative was claiming they would be coming to Canada to visit but was surely lying. When the pizza was ready, they plunked it down in the middle of the table and grabbed at it with forks and knives and fingers.

With a mouth full of dinner, France remembered she wanted to tell Meghan about her cousin Ariane. "Mm!" she said when she remembered, indicating that something had come into her mind but at unfortunate timing. She was not able to blurt it out in the way she wanted to, so she waved her hands excitedly and the other girls laughed and waited and finally after a rapid chew and swallow France said, "I've been dying to tell you about what Ariane told me about teaching at the LIP schools!"

"Oh ya, I remember Ariane. How is she doing? She was home too for the holidays?"

"She came home right around when I did but then had to go back sooner. But we talked quite a bit about the LIP."

Anke asked, "Is she a teacher in a LIP school?"

"Yes, she teaches in Ottawa in a grade 1 two-way Portuguese class." Then to both of them, "And she told me this story about how when she did her practicum for the teachers' college at Ottawa she had to do a session at a non LIP school and there were only three kids in the grade 5 class who were not from the dominant cultural group. They were these three little Korean boys, and they misbehaved all the time. When she got there on the first day the regular teacher warned her severely about them and said that they needed strict discipline because they were trouble makers and she did not want them negatively influencing the other kids. So Ariane acknowledged this but consciously resisted forming any judgment against these little boys until she had actually interacted with them. She never lets another teacher's experience of a student influence her impression of him prematurely." France took a bite of pizza.

What France said made Meghan think of the time a number of years ago when she volunteered for the Big Sisters association of Ambury and she had to visit a little girl in her school once a week over lunch hour to play with her and give her some one-on-one attention. Every single week the little girl's teacher would take Meghan aside as the class was being let out for lunch and tell her about what the little girl had done wrong that morning and could Meghan please have a word with her about it. Meghan was shocked every time that the teacher had such a negative view of the little girl. Meghan

knew the girl well and she knew she was not a bad kid and yet the teacher insisted she was. When Meghan talked to the girl about her teacher, it was clear that the little girl felt hated by the teacher and thus disliked her in return. It always seemed to Meghan that the girl had much better reasons for her feelings than the teacher did. The little girl often told Meghan of times when the teacher yelled at her for things she didn't do, and times when she was punished for something that wasn't her fault, and on and on. It was as if the teacher just had it in for her.

The little girl's mother had immigrated from Trinidad when she was young, and Meghan knew that her little friend was neglected at home and it broke her heart to see her treated the way she was by the teacher at school. It was clear to Meghan that the teacher had preconceived prejudices against the little girl and she had made it so that even school was not a place where the girl felt safe or wanted. Meghan was furious whenever she saw the teacher, and she did everything she could to build the little girl's confidence that she knew was being shattered into tinier and tinier pieces every single day.

She zoned back into France's story. "So anyways, Ariane got to know these Korean boys and it occurred to her quickly that their self-esteem was unusually low. There was no language support at all for these minority kids in this school, and it was evident to Ariane that these boys were under a lot more stress than their dominant group peers. They refused to participate in activities and they lashed out at others. But then one day when the regular teacher, who was supervising Ariane and who was clearly trained under the old system, told her at break that she was not disciplining the Korean boys enough, Ariane lost it!

She asked the teacher straight out if she had considered that perhaps their misbehaviour stemmed from being in an environment that they did not understand, where everything went on in a language with which they were not entirely familiar. Had she not considered that these little boys were used to being in control of a situation and felt very much left out of control in the classroom? They couldn't understand what was required of them, likely, and if you punish them for that then you only create a sharper desire in them to distance themselves from their own heritage and language and replace it with the dominant one. This doesn't have to happen. They can fully function and live an even richer life that includes both languages.

"So of course the next thing Ariane did when she was teaching the class was ask the Korean boys to bring in a favourite story book from home and read it to the class. They did, and the class listened as these boys, who they had previously thought were illiterate, shy problem causers, read their stories out loud in Korean. Their voices were so animated and one of them, Jin-su, got so into the story that he started making actions to accompany it because he knew his classmates couldn't understand what he was saying. The whole class listened keenly as he read and acted out the story. His face

showed so much expression, and he was such a good story teller that when a monster jumped out of a box, he startled the whole class with a jump! They loved it, and they applauded when he finished. Jin-su took about seventeen bows and finally sat down. Everyone wanted to tell him how fun that was when he sat down, and for the first time he felt validated in class. Then his classmates wanted to take a look at the book he was reading from. They couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the writing he could read. It meant nothing to them at all, and yet Jin-su was able to read it fluently. They instantly grew an enormous appreciation for their Korean classmates, and the status of the Korean language got bumped up about a million notches on the scale of coolness in their eyes!"

Meghan and Anke listened, emotion radiating off of their faces. France smiled, then ate more pizza.

Chapter Eighteen

Early in the new year, Tove Elementary news letters were sent out to all parents. Carlos found Lenika's stuffed at the bottom of her knapsack when he was looking for her lunch containers to wash. She came down the stairs as he was reading it, and proudly informed him that *Spanish* had gotten the purple paper. She had seen Miki's newsletter and it was orange. Orange was also good. Carlos looked up at her, smiled at what she was saying, then back to the newsletter. It read:

Dear Tove Parents,

A new year is upon us and enclosed in the following newsletter is some important information we request of you this semester. Please take the time to fill out the feedback sheets. We would like your opinion so far on the programme we provide for your children called the Language Inclusive Programme. We welcome any comments, suggestions, or criticisms you may have. The first sheet is for our statistics database. We keep track of the countries of origin of our students, mother tongue languages, and other information we consider vital to the development of programmes and the creation of a suitable environment at Tove. The second and third sheet are questions that we hope you will take the time to answer in detail. Space for elaborating your answers is provided. The fourth sheet is for our Resource Room. As you know, the Resource Room in the library at Tove is a wealth of cultural information for our students. It could not be possible without your help and donations. Please fill out the list of items you are able to contribute. There is a special need this year for artwork. Do not forget the section at the bottom regarding the conditions of your donation, as we recognize that not all

contributions can be permanent. We are exceedingly grateful for your support and generosity in this endeavour.

We would also like to invite you to attend our yearly General Meeting next month. We hold the General Meeting every year for teachers, students, parents and community members with the goal of improving the LIP based on the concerns and the needs expressed at the meeting. We also take the opportunity at the General Meeting to up-date you on research and literature in the field of education. Our guest speakers come from a range of disciplines connected to education, and they will present their current work at the meeting, and request your input. This will allow you not only to learn about but also to be a part of the process of creating a policy for multicultural learning and bilingual education for your children.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's teacher for more information or for any questions that should arise. Thank you for an excellent first semester, and I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

A. Gul-Chehra

Principal, Tove Elementary School

Thursdays at Tove were regular school days unless, of course, you were a student in Mrs. Yamamoto's grade 4 English-medium class. Here, Thursdays were *kontatu* days. This meant that everyone had to report on their community project, and share with the class what they had gathered that week. The community project was an on-going assignment that each student was working on over the course of the month of January. As the class was made up of children from Hindi, Tamil, Korean, Japanese, Swahili, Urdu, and English speaking backgrounds, their task was to choose a language community that was not their own, and make a scrapbook about it. This gave them the opportunity to learn about a culture different from theirs, but at the end of the project the final task was to work together with a person who chose your own culture and help them fill in their scrapbook. This way the students were challenged to learn about where the others in their class came from, and at the same time, share their own background.

The benefit she valued from this activity was having the children communicate in English with other English learners. This taught them about the varieties of the English language, and how the non-native variety is just as legitimate and correct as the native speaker variety. The class brainstormed

together at the beginning of the month to find the topics they wished to cover in their scrapbooks.

After some reorganization and subcategorization, the final list included traditions, languages, religions, geography, and ancient peoples. Each week the students were to share what they learned with the class.

As Mrs. Yamamoto predicted, the first week was a lot more challenging than the kids were expecting, as they quickly realized that many of the language communities were made up of people from different countries, and no one answer was to be found for any of the categories. Because two families speak a common minority language does not group them as a homogenous minority culture.

After the second day, a small Indian boy named Mayank came to her desk in tears, and Mrs. Yamamoto eventually discerned that it was the community project that was the cause of his misery. He had chosen Arabic speakers as the community to examine, and had gone home to ask for help from his parents. They called up their Israeli friends, who were native Arabic speakers. They gave Mayank as much information as they could in terms of their traditional foods and customs. They even sent their son over to share with him some Bamba.

However, later that evening Mayank's mother took him to the Arabic grocery store to ask *them* for some input. Mayank discovered, to his dismay, that Arabic speakers did not come from only Israel and India. In fact, they are a minority in Israel and a majority in several other countries, and everyone ate different things! He did not know what to do, so he began a separate page in his scrapbook for the foods of all the Arabic speaking countries he could remember. But there were too many, and in the end, he took out his frustration on the teacher at her desk. She calmed him and told him to simply choose *one* of the Arabic speaking communities and focus on it.

With her hand on his shoulder, "Mayank you have done an outstanding job already, and you have barely even begun! I am so pleased to hear about everything you have learned so far." She awarded him with a horse sticker. "Now, which community of Arabic speakers would you like to research?"

He looked at the pages he had begun in his scrapbook and inevitably chose the page that was the most complete. "Israeli," he answered, and felt much better.

The little cuckoo clock alerted the class that the language support staff was arriving in five minutes. As usual, the students eagerly began packing up what they were working on and then waited for the silly bird to pop its head out on the hour. Ten o'clock arrived, accompanied by 10 cuckoos. The kids rushed out the door towards their respective language rooms. Remaining in Mrs. Yamamoto's classroom, after the whirlwind of feet had cleared, were the seven Anglophone students. They had grouped together around Caroline's desk and the girls were now dodging an oncoming assault of paper

balls. The boys knew, of course, that they would have to pick them all up as soon as the teacher was back, and Caroline was acting as calm as can be, seemingly warning *you are going to have to pick those all up.*

When the floor was clean and the kids and teacher huddled together on the carpet, Mrs. Yamamoto asked if there was anything anyone would like to talk about today during Cultural Awareness. She always began the class this way. Earlier that week, Sam, a Chinese Canadian, told the class that a grade 5 had stolen his lunch on the way to school. Mrs. Yamamoto took this very seriously and the rest of the Cultural Awareness class had been used to talk about what is a bully and why there are bullies. Mrs. Yamamoto was pleased with the openness with which her students shared their experiences and feelings.

This morning, as there was nothing in particular the children wished to discuss, she asked them, "Do you think there are some feelings and emotions that are common to everybody around the world? Do you think there is anything that people feel in Canada just as they do in El Salvador, just as they do in Nigeria, just as they do in Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, and everywhere else?" The children thought about it for a moment. She pushed further, "Sam has grandparents in China, Helena has grandparents in Greece, and the rest of you have grandparents here in Canada. What do you think all our grandparents have in common?"

Helena put up her hand. "They, um, they love us because we're their grandchildren."

"Very good, so love is an emotion that people everywhere share in common."

Caroline, "They like to give us lots of food." Everyone laughed.

"Yes, you're right. Sharing food is a common ritual, looking out for the well-being of others," affirmed the teacher.

Helena added, "My grandma always makes me eat so much when I go to visit. Not my grandma in Greece. I have another one and she lives here."

"Good," Mrs. Yamamoto praised. Then, "What about sadness? Is sadness something that everyone feels?" The seven heads nodded. "What makes you sad?"

"I am sad when my mom is angry with me," offered Tristan.

"When I see all the killing that is on the TV I am sad."

"So am I, Sam," Mrs. Yamamoto said. "One of the most important things to remember when we meet new people is that we have many, many things in common with them. If someone looks different from you, or likes to wear different clothes, or eats different things, they *still* share many common emotions with you. They still feel love for somebody, they still feel sad and scared sometimes, and they probably still like ice cream!" The class cheered.

Chapter Nineteen

When the lunch bell rang, Lenika raced down the stairs to the main office. Her father was dropping off her lunch, which she had forgotten on the kitchen table that morning. How could she think of food when that afternoon was her big story-telling moment! But of course, by the time mid day rolled around, her little tummy was rumbling and she was more than grateful for the left-over rice and veggies that she knew were on their way over. While she was waiting in the office, she hung onto Javier's desk and leaned all the way back until she lost her grip and went stumbling backwards. She giggled and propped herself up to try again.

"You're going to hurt yourself, Lenika," his eyebrows said from behind the desk. She stood up and slouched her elbows down on his desk and stared at him.

"Por que nunca hablas español, Javi?" Lenika only spoke Spanish to Javier. He understood almost perfectly, but rarely answered in Spanish. Lenika was one of Javier's favourite students to tease. He loved making her laugh because she had the glitteriest laugh he had ever heard, and her brown eyes lit up without fail when he teased her. At the moment, however, her expression told him her question was quite in earnest. He cleared his throat and considered how to answer. It had never really been put so bluntly to him before. Why did he never speak Spanish?

"Pues," he began. She watched his eyebrows as he pondered his answer. "Pues, when I was growing up, my parents spoke Spanish to me but then I started school and it was all in English."

"Why didn't you go to two-way school?"

"We didn't have it when I was little. Tove is new, remember, and London didn't have a LIP school. I would have had to move to Toronto or Vancouver, and my parents both had jobs in Ambury."

She looked terrified. "Did you have to go to Honey Elementary?"

He chuckled, "No, but I went to an English-medium school, just like Honey. I didn't speak any English and nobody there spoke any Spanish, except a few of the other students. But we were not allowed to speak in Spanish together. If the teacher caught us speaking Spanish we were in big trouble. The teacher was real mean."

She squealed as the eyebrows zigzagged into a monster face and Javi came at her with claws. He sat back. "No. That's not true. The teacher was actually very nice, but she believed that I needed to become an English speaker and no longer a Spanish speaker if I wanted to succeed. She thought that my continuing to learn Spanish would somehow stop me from learning English."

Lenika shook her head and the curls in her ponytail danced. She had certainly heard that before. "It's not true, Javi," she said.

"I know. Now I know, guapa," he said. "That's why I love working at Tove. Teachers are so much better trained now than they used to be. They know about teaching through multiple languages and the benefits of a policy based on critical pedagogy."

"But you didn't forget all your Spanish, at least."

"Si, I did forget it all. It completely vanished from my linguistic repertoire for most of my teenage and young adult life. Only when I got to university did I start to learn it again. I took an introduction to Spanish class in my first year, and I had to start from scratch with all the Anglos. I have to admit, it was pretty embarrassing being of Spanish descent and having to take an intro to Spanish class! It was just such a waste because I already *had* literacy skills in that language, but policy at school had not allowed me to further develop them. The main concern was that I learned English. Retaining and maturing my Spanish was not a priority.

And to think, how much money it must have cost the government to make all us language minorities monolingual in English and then pay all the costs later to make them back into bilinguals! Crazy, really. That's why I get such a kick out of it when..." Lenika had furrowed her brow in confusion. "That means I thought it was funny." She processed this and then nodded. "I think it is so funny when I read about how people in charge say it costs too much to have bilingual education. Bilingual education happens all over the world! It's silly *not* to because how far can a nation get in this day and age with a population that only speaks English?! Especially a country like Canada that is so rich in linguistic resources. Why would we ever want to smother all our first languages in the name of everyone speaking only English?!" He bit his lip and shook his head in disbelief, or perhaps in disapproval.

"In my university class, the only area I was stronger than the rest of them was in oral comprehension because my parents never stopped speaking Spanish to me. That was lucky. If they had stopped, I probably would have lost my comprehension skills too because I had blocked it out of my life. I was taught to block it out of my life, Lenika. I wanted to be accepted by my classmates at school, and that meant acting and speaking and even thinking like them. Things have changed a lot in the last twenty years."

Lenika thought of Elisa. She went to the same kind of school where there was nothing in Spanish at all. Only English, even though there were lots of kids in her class from different countries. "My cousin went to a school like that."

Just then her father rushed through the front door and into the office. Apologies for being late, a wink at Javi, and he was off again. Lenika made him look at the catfish, which she and Kristin had named 'Furry' on his way out.

"Beso, mi amor," Carlos called to her as she galloped down the hall back to her classroom, swinging the lunch bag, "y suerte en el cuento!" She turned and smiled the sweetest little smile. His heart melted, as it did every single time she smiled at him since the day she was born. He turned and headed home.

Lenika took her time walking back to the classroom. There was so much to read in Tove Elementary. Sometimes she and Kristin would spend their entire free time at lunch wandering the halls, reading. Or, at least looking at everything there was to read. The stairwells, the window ledges, the display cases in the hallways, the classroom doors, and the blank spaces on the walls were always covered with new things to read. Posters and newspaper clippings and student work and everything in so many different languages. The alphabets and letterings of all the writing alone was enough to keep the girls occupied as they roamed from hallway to hallway. It occurred to Lenika that after only a few short weeks at Tove, she had gotten into the habit of reading everything she passed, even outside of school. Now, when her father or mother took her grocery shopping or to the Culture Centre or even just for a walk downtown, she was constantly reading and deciphering the print that surrounded her. Her reading skills had improved so much that she had even graduated to a new section of the Ambury Public Library. The *banana* stickered books. Well, in Spanish reading anyways. She was still at *kiwi* for English. But she was determined to get to *banana* for English too.

Over lunch, Lenika and Felipe sat together and finished colouring in the pictures of their story book. Of the two of them, Lenika had the nicest handwriting, so she had written the text. But Felipe was the stronger artist, so he had drawn the pictures. They had composed the story together and they were extremely proud. Yesterday, Nathan and Jamie had read their story to the class and everybody laughed at the part when the character named Nathan toppled over into the river because he was looking at the fish. After hearing the response from his classmates over this episode, Felipe asked Lenika that evening if they could add in a part where their character, Momo the lizard, fell into a river. Momo the lizard moved from Mexico to Canada and their story took place in London, Ontario, where Lenika had never been but Felipe had spent a weekend once. Really, they modeled London after Ambury, which they both knew well. Lenika thought the river idea was genius. It was sure to make the class roar with laughter. And so she added a page at the very end where Momo is in the forest and falls right over into the river. This is the page they were hurrying to colour in as they ate their apples. Finally the bell rang and their classmates began filing in from wherever they had spent the lunch hour,

the playground, the Resource Room, the computer room. When he saw Ms.Simpson, Felipe went and asked her, "How do you say *riachuelo* in English?"

"Go ask an English speaker," she answered in Spanish.

Felipe and Lenika had made their way over to the two *important* chairs at the head of the carpet and were sitting, ankles wrapped around the legs of the chair, waiting for their teacher to tell everyone to please have a seat on the carpet. By the time Ms.Simpson came in, most of the students were sitting at their desks, some were looking at the displays up on the walls, some were rummaging through the art supplies box, and Lenika and Felipe were sitting on the chairs in front of a carpet that housed only Kristin. She was sitting cross-legged looking anxiously up at her friends, blonde curls falling on her shoulders. Lenika and Felipe had specifically asked *her* for help with the English translation part of their book, even after Juana, Felipe's older sister, had looked it over. Kristin considered this to be a contribution of equal magnitude to the authors' work itself, and thus took up a seat front row centre, so that the rest of the audience would be sure to deduce her position of prestige. Ms.Simpson certainly did. She said to the class in English, as it was the English half of the day, "Would everyone please have a seat on the carpet, with the assistant translator, for today's story!" Kristin's rosy cheeks beamed.

"Tengo una pregunta para ustedes," Ms.Simpson began the next day after lunch was over and it was the Spanish half of the day. "How would you like it if your parents came in one afternoon and told stories to us?" The little faces lit up.

"Si!" someone exclaimed.

"I thought it would be a fun idea if we joined with Mrs. Francis' class one afternoon and listened to everyone's parents tell a story from their own country. What do you think?"

The class was wholeheartedly in agreement with the plan, and they set about making invitations for their parents or grandparents.

"Please tell them that it will be held on Friday, February 17th at 2:00pm. You can help them choose the stories, but they must be no longer than 10 minutes long. Your parents can tell them in either Spanish or English or both, and the parents of the students in Mrs. Francis' class will be telling them in their home languages as well."

Felipe put his hand up, "Mis padres no podran venir." His father worked as usual, and his mother now worked afternoons five days a week, and would not be able to make it for 2pm.

"Well," suggested Ms.Simpson, "it is certain that not everyone's parents will be able to come. What do you think about having this time as a trial run and if we enjoy ourselves then we will plan a

big end of the year story-telling evening when everyone's parents will be able to attend?" Everyone nodded their heads.

Once their letters of invitation were finished, some in English some in Spanish some in hybrid, the children took out their school journals and began to brainstorm ideas for their daily entry. Ms.Simpson had shown them a way to brainstorm by writing a big idea in the middle of the page and then having branches coming out of it with smaller ideas related to the big one. It looked like a web, so they called it an ideas web. Lenika was going to write about her best friend Ana from back home.

"Yo conoci a Ana un dia porque ella vino al daycare de mi madre..."

Chapter Twenty

The little girl that Lenika worked with some mornings in Mr. Tremblay's class was named Miki. She was 6 and was born in Ambury. Her parents were Japanese and only spoke Japanese to her at home. In fact, Miki spoke better Japanese than she did English. When Lenika volunteered in Mr.Tremblay's class she usually sat with Miki on the carpet and worked on a scrapbook they were making together. Sometimes Miki would tell her things in Japanese and Lenika could only guess what she was saying. But other times the two of them spent the hour saying what different things were called in their languages. They even started a chart. In the middle was the English word. One of the girls would point to something and they had to say what it was in English. Usually Miki knew this quicker than Lenika, but sometimes they said it at the very same time. Then they each had to write the word in their language beside the English word. It became a game, and after a little while the teacher himself asked if the girls could show what they had invented to the rest of the class. Before they knew it, every pair of grade 2 - grade 5 kids had a chart going. Best of all, Lenika was learning hiragana, one of the Japanese alphabets.

One particular morning in March, shortly after they had invented the chart game, Miki was more excited than ever when Lenika arrived for their session. Lenika thought at first that she was excited to see her because they were going to play their game, but was quickly told that Miki's mother was going to be doing the two-hour language session with the Japanese speakers in her class. Usually it was Hiro's father but he had decided to open a restaurant and so Mr.Tremblay's class needed a new Japanese language teacher. It was decided just that morning, Lenika learned, that it was to be Miki's mother. Miki's mother was an art teacher at the Culture Centre and so she was a top pick for the available position because of her teaching experience.

Miki was excited for the individual language session and she kept asking Lenika what time it was. Lenika tried to interest her in the scrapbook, but Miki's attention span was even shorter than usual. Her shiny black hair was tied back from her forehead and held in place with plastic duck clips above each ear. Lenika told Miki what *duck* was in Spanish and waited for her to say it in Japanese. Instead, her little friend looked at her and just kept on chattering away about her mother coming to teach Japanese that morning and how she was bringing one of Miki's favourite books. She tried to speak in English, but it was mainly hybrid Japanese-English. This happened when she got excited about something. For the sixth time, Lenika told her what time it was.

Then she got a great idea. Lenika took the scrapbook and drew a big circle on a new page. A minute later, it was a clock, and shortly after that, the two girls had taught each other how to write 10:00 in their language. 10:00 was when Miki's mother arrived. Lenika smiled as she left from the session that day. It was this kind of morning that made her daydream about being a teacher.

Outside at recess, she joined Jamie and Kristin who were playing with a soccer ball on the grass by the baseball diamond. Jamie, whose neighbour was Brazilian, had learned how to keep the ball up with his feet and knees for almost two whole minutes. Over by the fence Lenika could see Carla's mother talking with a woman she did not recognize but knew it must be the parent of another student at Tove. Parents were asked to volunteer whenever possible to supervise recess. Her own father had come a few times when he had had the morning off work. Lenika loved having him there and she asked him to stay and come to class with her afterwards, but he only laughed and said he had to get home to make Angel lunch.

Chapter Twenty one

It was a typical spring morning in Ambury. The trees were covered in budding leaves, which gave the parks and streets a mossy green glow. Birds were busy and noisy, and the tulips were beginning to make their first appearance on front lawns. The air smelled of earth and rain and re-emerging life. People seemed to be in a better mood, as if the whole world had just woken up from a long siesta. And it was baby season. Animals, of course, like the rabbit family that had made their home in the park in front of the library. All the children in town knew about them and a trip to the library was not complete without an investigation into what they were busied by that particular afternoon. But it was baby season for people too. Suddenly, strollers were out along the park paths, and men and women of all walks of life were seen around town with little baby knap-sacks strapped to

their fronts and backs. In the grocery store, at the café on the corner, in the Culture Centre, and at restaurants, these new miniature people were making their debut on the world's stage. Indeed, of the people who have had the good fortune to experience it, many would agree that during springtime, Ambury was one of the most pleasant places to be in Ontario.

For the Costas, it was an especially happy time of year. Lenika had been at Tove Elementary now for nearly seven months. Her English was advancing rapidly, and her Spanish was developing at an impressive rate as well. Maria and Carlos felt that they could not have hoped for a better situation for their daughter even had they stayed in their own country where Spanish was the predominant language. It didn't take them long to realise when they moved to Canada just how easy it could have been for their children to forget their first language and assimilate entirely into the dominant culture and language here. They had not seen the danger in this at the beginning, that is, how they could so easily have formed a negative impression of their home country and never learned to appreciate the story they left behind.

Maria, especially, wanted so badly for Lenika and Angel to go back one day and reconnect with friends and family they had left when they made the decision to emigrate. She wanted her children to remember that where they had first learned about the world was *there*, not here. She wanted that to mean something to them, and not be forgotten or dismissed as something impossible to search out.

She saw it in Elisa. A beautiful, intelligent young woman who had become so engulfed in mainstream culture in Toronto that she did not know at all about what her parents had gone through to bring her here or why they chose to do so. She does not remember any of the values from back home, all her values are now those of any other teenage girl brought up in a capitalist, consumer-based, media-run society like Canada. She has lost all trace of the Elisa she was until she was four years old.

At school on this lovely morning Ms. Simpson's class was busy on their latest project. It was going to be a binder called 'Help!' for new students at Tove Elementary. The students were working in teams to design pages dealing with the challenges the new comers faced in their first weeks in Canada, and response pages dealing with what could be done in these situations both by the new comer and the students already established. Lenika and Kristin were in charge of the map of the building.

Chapter Twenty two

Classes were cancelled at the Culture Centre over the Spring Holiday weekend in April, and Carlos had planned to take Angel shopping for a new second-hand bicycle. He had come home from a

friend's house on more than one occasion whining that he was the only boy in the city without a bicycle to ride to the library. Maria and Carlos discussed the matter and decided that if they could find one for an affordable price, he should have it. Carlos' brother Luis had given Lenika his daughter's old bike last summer, and in the weeks before Easter when the snow had melted and wheels of all sorts began to reappear on the sidewalks and road sides, Lenika had taken her little brother out to the street in front of their house and held the large bicycle steady as he climbed up. His feet could not reach the pedals, of course, but she tried her best to simulate a bike ride for him. After he fell off and hollered for a minute over a scraped knee, the simulation ended in a piggy back ride into the kitchen to get bandaged up.

As Angel's excursion to find a bike of his own landed Lenika without her usual playmate for Sunday morning, she asked if she could invite Kristin over to plant in the garden with her. Lenika knew very well that planting in the garden meant digging up as many bugs as they could find. Worms were the easiest, actually, because they practically wiggled their own way onto the shovels if you waited long enough. But somehow Kristin always managed to find the funniest looking bugs of all. Once, a wide-eyed Lenika was telling her mother, Kristin found a bug with six wiry legs sticking out of a shiny black shell and they couldn't find its head no matter how hard they looked.

Rrrring. Lenika switched into English, "May I speak to Kristin please?" As she waited, Lenika twirled herself in the phone cord which was long enough to reach around the corner into the family room.

"Hello?"

"Hola! Can you play?"

"Si! Momentito, voy a pedir permission a mamá."

Lenika untwirled herself back the way she had come.

"I can come over."

"Ok bye!"

"Bye."

Lenika raced upstairs to put socks on then raced back downstairs to find the shovels in the back of the front closet. She knew it took exactly 17 minutes to walk between hers and her best friend's house. If Kristin had to hang up the phone, race up the stairs to put socks on, race back down, tie her shoes and then leave, it would take her precisely 18 and a half minutes to get here. This meant that Lenika had just enough time to collect the equipment they would need and intercept Kristin coming around the corner.

"Mamá!" she shouted from inside the front closet. Maria poked her head into the hallway and could see no one. She waited for the voice to call again.

"Mamá!" from the closet. Maria chuckled and went over to search for her daughter amongst winter coats and boots and a roller skate or two. She found the curly ponytail and asked what she was doing in the closet.

"Where's the blue bucket? And the jars I had last time?" Maria reached up to the top shelf of the closet and brought down a dirty plastic bucket with four glass jars and lids inside. There were also two small garden shovels, a pair of cloth gloves, a magnifying glass, and a fork. She then opened a shoe box that was also on the top shelf and showed it to her daughter.

"Do you think you two can handle these?" she asked. Lenika peered inside at a mass of onion bulbs, and nodded, two little dimples forming above the corners of her mouth. She took the gear in her arms and hurried outside.

"Tie your shoes!" Maria called after her.

Lenika could see Kristin coming down the sidewalk and she waved. The girls walked round the back of the house to the corner where the back fence met the ivy wire. This was the section of the garden that Maria had not yet tended to herself, and she had told the girls they could play as much as they liked there, until she got round to it. At the moment it was simply some small dirt mounds with weeds sprouting up and the occasional purple crocus. They were forbidden to disturb the crocuses, Maria warned, because they were beautiful. This was the corner where the girls had worked last time, but there was no trace of their excavations, for it had rained at least four times since then. Lenika dumped the bucket onto the grass and they each reached for their shovel.

"Donde está tu hermano?" Kristin asked.

"He went to get a new bicicleta. Mi padre se lo ha prometido."

"I got a new one last summer porque la otra era demasiado pequeña cause I grew two feet since I was little! My mom put it on the wall."

"Tu bicicleta?"

"No!" Kristin giggled, "My altura!"

"Like at school."

"Ya and my line is higher than Meghan's was when she was 10."

"Mine is higher que Felipe."

Kristin dug up a worm and squealed.

"Dame lo!" Lenika quickly opened a glass jar and they dropped their fist captive of the day into his new home.

"Espera, tierra y comida." Kristin added a handful of dirt and a couple blades of grass.

"His name is Billy." The girls burst out in laughter.

Just then, Lenika looked up and noticed a small face peering at them from behind the baby ivy leaves. It was Matthew, the red-headed boy from nextdoor. Lenika smiled and asked him if he wanted to come dig for bugs with them. He shook his head but did not move. Lenika then held up the jar with their lone worm and said, "See?" Matthew did not react. Instead, he hesitated, then turned and ran inside.

"Is that your vecino?" asked Kristin.

Lenika explained he was Angel's friend. Kristin caught another worm.

Matthew burst inside the kitchen and exclaimed to his father that the girls in the garden weren't really speaking English.

Grant laughed and asked, "Are they speaking Spanish?" Matthew shook his head and looked at his father as if he had just witnessed the most extraordinary thing of his life.

"No. They weren't speaking either one."

Grant laughed again. "Well what were they speaking, Bengali?"

The red curls on Matthew's head shook. His face was entirely serious. "No. They were speaking *both*."

Grant nodded. "Oh. Well, yes, that's called code-switching. Bilingual people do it often. It's normal, Matty. It's just an easier way to communicate, even though they certainly could both communicate in one or the other language if they wanted to. And they do. There are different contexts for different language varieties, and hybrids are common amongst friends."

"But it doesn't make any sense."

"Yes it does, buddy." Grant picked up his little boy and sat him down on the kitchen counter. A wet paper towel began to wipe the backyard off his face.

"No. Because the sentences were only half finished. I heard them."

"Matty, you don't understand Spanish yet, that's why it didn't make sense to you. Next year when you go to school you will be learning two languages at the same time and eventually you and your friends, and even you and great aunt Nina, will likely talk like that." Grant opened the fridge to get a chocolate milk. He split it with his son. Susanna walked in and inquired what the heated debate was all about. She lifted Matthew off the kitchen counter and gave her husband a disapproving look. Matthew was gone again out the door.

"He heard Lenika next door speaking hybrid with her friend."

"Spanglish?"

"Mhm."

"I love hearing people speak like that. I wish Nina had spoken more Italian with my mom after she moved out here cause then maybe I could speak hybrid. Mom didn't think it was important to expose us to her native language, and I have regretted my whole life not knowing to seek after it when I was younger. I just wish that part of our history could have been as important to my mother as it is to me because now I am left with a longing to share a part of me with our children, and I can't.

"I know we've been through this before, but it's just so frustrating to me that educators and everyone weren't aware back then that a child can learn two languages at once without them interfering with each other. My mother really did think that if I wanted to learn English that I couldn't also learn Italian! So here I am at 34 with Italian heritage and not a word of Italian in my repertoire. What a shame." She thought for a moment.

"Code-switching is such a cool phenomenon because it just goes to show that languages are not homogenous or closed systems. They're alive and changing and never fit into discrete or fixed categories. Code-switching *undoes* languages from these artificial boundaries some people perceive around them. I mean, it just provides so much legitimacy for the fluid, evolving and creative nature of languages."

Grant listened and nodded. He loved it when his wife got passionate about a topic. She started using her hands to talk.

"My mother and Nina used to take a lot of flak from my grandfather when they started code-switching over the phone. Mom could hear him in the background cursing that his daughters were not pigeons."

"Pigeons?"

"Mhm, it's a term that's actually pretty derogatory in my mind. I think it comes from *pidgin*, which is used to refer to patterns of language like those girls were doing. Weaving and moving freely and smoothly among languages. Such a natural thing to do and yet so looked down upon in those days. I'm glad you explained it to Matty. It's so important to realize that fusions are actual full-blown languages of their own and require a high level of cognitive ability to speak."

"Yes, I think he was fascinated more than anything. The little guy! He is going to have such a blast at Tove this year. And he'll be able to teach you Italian before long!" They laughed, and Grant wrapped his arms around her waist in a dramatic hug.

Chapter Twenty three

The information session had already begun when Susanna and Grant tiptoed through the doors of the main room in the Community Centre. It was not a large room to begin with, and it was so stuffed full of people this evening that it seemed even smaller than usual. The far wall housed the room's three windows, and the blinds were drawn shut at the moment, so as to block out the setting sun, which would surely otherwise obstruct the audience's viewing of the powerpoint slides. The one on the screen when they walked in was a picture of Tove Elementary, and this suggested to the couple that they had not missed anything crucial. Indeed they had not, a large woman informed them in a whisper as they took the seats next to her. She then filled them in that the man was Mr. Ted Wallace, one of the co-founders of the LIP school network who now taught two-way Italian at Tove, and the woman was Adila Gul-Chehra, also a co-founder of the LIP and now the principal at Tove.

"Thank you," Susanna mouthed to her. Susanna and Grant turned their attention to the front of the room where Mr. Wallace was speaking. He was up on a stage, so that he was still above the audience and visible despite his being in a wheelchair.

"And so for linguistic groups who do not have the numbers to fill the two-way programme, what we are here to discuss with you tonight is the option to send your children to a LIP school in what we call the English-medium classes. In Ambury, the largest language minority groups we have population-wise are Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, and Arabic and those are the languages that are available in two-way immersion."

Mrs. Gul-Chehra added, "If you are a parent from one of these language groups and are interested in the two-way immersion option, we will be having information sessions particularly geared to your interests later this month. This evening's session is going to look specifically at the options for Anglophone parents and parents from language groups that are not one of the seven that Ted just mentioned. We *strongly* recommend that if you are a non-Anglophone parent that you consider two-way immersion for your child if yours *is* one of the languages we offer. If that is your case, please, *please* attend a two-way immersion info session." She waved for Ted to continue.

"And so at Tove Elementary, you can see, there are three classes for each grade from K to 5 (a Spanish two-way, an Italian two-way, and an English-medium), and our total student population is somewhere around 750 at the moment. Woodthorn Elementary, which offers two-way immersion in three languages, is even larger." He glanced at Mrs. Gul-Chehra for a confirmation. She nodded.

"First tonight," Mr. Wallace clicked his laptop, "we would like to outline the options available for Anglophone families, which I assume are the majority of you. I will then describe in detail the English-medium classes, which is where your children would be placed if you are from a linguistic background other than the seven dominant ones, or an Anglophone who chooses not to have their child

in a two-way immersion class.” He waited for a minute, almost expecting a question but as there was none, he said, “I know this can be confusing at first. Here is a chart that hopefully clears things up. Is there anyone who would like it in a language other than English?”

A couple at the back raised their hand, indicated Ukrainian, and a man at the front indicated Arabic. Mrs. Gul-Chehra rummaged for a moment in the file folder they had brought and handed them each their respective sheets. She also spoke to the man at the front, telling him she would be happy to answer any questions he had in Arabic.

This reminded her to let everyone know, and she said quickly before Mr. Wallace re-began, “We are happy to answer any questions, between the two of us, in Arabic, Mandarin, Hindi, French, Spanish, Italian or Swedish and our written material is available, as Ted said, in many languages other than these as well. Sorry, Ted,” she said, and he continued.

“And so you can see from the chart that if you are the parent of an Anglophone child then you have two options at Tove. The first is to put your child in the English-medium class, in which he will be instructed only in English. This is still, however, different from sending him to a school like Honey Elementary because of the school and classroom environment.

“Tove is a multilingual school where the languages and cultures of the students are widely used, promoted, and valued and thus heard and seen throughout the school. All our school events and activities take place multilingually, and your children will be surrounded by a culturally and linguistically rich and diverse environment. They will also have ample opportunity for learning or at least being exposed to other languages at many points throughout their daily school lives because of the encounters they will have with speakers of different languages. Their classrooms alone will be made up of speakers of many different languages, and when they interact with their classmates, languages other than English will be used by all. Along with English, of course. Furthermore, the learning of other languages is woven into the curriculum, at very least implanting an interest and curiosity in your children.

“Now, if you choose to register your child in an English-medium class, then there will be a two-hour session every afternoon when the non-Anglophone students in the class will be spending time with the language support staff and therefore will be separated into small language clusters. During this time, the Anglophone students receive what we call ‘Cultural Awareness’ lessons. These have proved extremely successful at our schools in Toronto and Vancouver, and we are excited for this upcoming school year because of the wonderful participation we have had from the community at our annual LIP meetings the past couple years. These meetings happen at every LIP school in the springtime where teachers, parents, students, volunteers, anyone can come and talk about what is

working and what isn't at the school. What they liked and didn't like. What they want more of, or less of. And best of all, it is at these LIP conferences where we get a ton of great ideas for the Cultural Awareness classes."

Question on the far right. "Yes?" he answered.

"Just to clarify, the LIP schools are public schools which means they follow the Ontario Ministry curriculum, right?"

"Yes, absolutely. They are public schools. They are just public schools with a Language Inclusive Programme, which involves the teaching of cultural awareness. The teachers will meet all the requirements of the Ministry, but will do so in a culturally sensitive way, including multiple perspectives and methods often generated from the ethnic communities themselves." He flipped to the next slide.

"The other option for Anglophone children, and this is by far the more popular one, as the importance of bi and multilingualism is becoming so widely known, is to put your child into one of the two-way immersion classes. What that means is that you would choose from the seven languages that are offered as two-way immersion in our LIP schools. At Tove it is Spanish or Italian, at Edwards, Hindi and Arabic, and at Woodthorn, Portuguese, Mandarin and Cantonese. Your child would then be in a class with *ideally* an equal number of native English speakers and native allophones. It does happen of course that there are classes with largely more of one or the other language group, usually the foreign language speakers. But either way, the class is taught bilingually. Half of the day is taught in English and half in the other language, every day. This benefits both the minority language speakers because it allows them to use the language skills already have, and learn English at the same time; and it benefits the dominant language speakers because it exposes them to and teaches them a new language."

A woman at the front, "If my daughter begins in the English-medium in Kindergarten, and then by the time she reaches grade 2 there is a two-way Polish class offered, can she switch over?"

"Yes of course. This does happen on occasion, when we evaluate the population demands of a particular language community and decide to offer two-way immersion for only one or two grades."

"But what happens when that class graduates and moves on to the next grade where you hadn't hired a two-way teacher?"

"The same teacher follows the class until there are enough students to bring in teachers for all the grades."

"I see. And what kind of language or placement test would my daughter have to do if she entered the new Polish two-way?"

“There are no placement tests. In the situation you just described, it would mean that the Polish speaking community would have expanded enough that there are 10 to 12 Polish speaking children, ideally in every grade, but perhaps in one or two grades only. And so the two-way immersion is implemented. At that point we advertise the year ahead so Anglophone parents can consider enrolling their child in the Polish two-way for the next year, and fill the spaces in order to make a class of 20 students studying bilingually. The only time we do language placement testing is in the rare case that an English-medium student switches to a two-way programme.”

Susanna could hear two Anglophone parents whispering behind her. “My sister’s kids were in two-way immersion in Winnipeg and she says she is amazed at how much they benefited from the academic work in two languages. Now they are in high school and they have out-performed the children from monolingual programmes, and have *sustained* the gains they made even though they now have chosen to study mainly in English.” Susanna shifted her attention back to the front of the room.

Chapter Twenty four

When Monday morning arrived, Lenika went straight to Ms.Simpson and asked her if she could stay in for recess and go to the library to find some books for her brother. Angel was starting at Tove in September, and Lenika promised to help him practise his reading. When they were moving to Canada, Maria had insisted at the beginning that they bring all of the books the family had accumulated over the years because books were treasures. They were to leave none behind. They would be the family’s connection to their country, she said. And the kids needed to learn to read. So, as they piled all their belongings onto the truck to have them shipped off to Canada, books alone took up about five boxes, and seemed to weigh about that many tons.

It turned out that getting all those books to Canada was going to cost them too much, and finally Lenika and Angel had to settle for only their favourites. Although she had stuffed her allotted box as full as possible, she had by this time in May, read and re-read each of them (plus the extra one she had snuck in her pocket) at least a half dozen times. This was partly because for the first months at Honey Elementary, there had been such a lack of Spanish books for her to choose from, but also partly because they *were* her favourites, after all. Now, at Tove, Lenika borrowed a pile of books every week in Spanish and usually two or three in English as well. She devoured them like dulce de leche at a fiesta, and often by Saturday she was out of reading material for the weekend, and had to spend a few minutes at the library on her way home with Felipe.

“Si, claro,” replied Ms.Simpson, but ask a friend to go too. Kristin, of course. The bell rang and everyone filed out towards the stairs to the playground. Lenika and Kristin, armed with their permission cards around their necks, turned the other way and headed to the library. They met Giacinta, the librarian’s assistant, at the door. They sang an enthusiastic hello in Italian, and then spoke English to her.

“Can we see the *file* please?”

Giacinta was always thrilled to show students to the Resource Room, as if it was her very own prized possession. Usually, it was entire classes that came down to the library at once, and spent an extended period of time getting books or exploring the Resource Room. Sometimes it was the smaller minority language clusters who came down to spend their class in the Resource Room, and often it was the Anglophones during their Cultural Awareness class. The Resource Room was, after all, a gold mine for multicultural lesson plans.

Every now and then, however, a stray student or two would show up at the library with a permission card or a note from their teacher saying it was ok for them to spend half an hour in the Resource Room. Lenika was one of the regulars.

The Resource Room was a fairly large room in the corner of the library, separated by its own set of tall, elegant French doors. Being admitted to the Resource Room was like being admitted to the grand foyer of a palace. And the wealth to be discovered was equal in both, as far as Lenika was concerned. The room had been decorated by the grade 5 classes last year, and their artwork on the walls and hanging from the ceiling was as diverse as the students were themselves. There were also two couches, a rocking chair, and a long, low coffee table in the middle of the room. Just like the rest of the library, the Resource Room was home to a variety of potted and hanging plants.

The Resource Room had three main features. The first was the audiovisual corner. Here, children could watch international movies and listen to music. The equipment usually had to be used with the supervision of a teacher, so Lenika did not pay much attention to the selection when she was there alone.

The second was the file cabinet, which took up one entire wall. It wasn’t a regular file cabinet like the ugly grey metal one that Mr. Wallace had in his classroom. It was more like a giant wooden book case with drawers sliding out of some, but not all, of the shelves. Pulling out the drawers to discover what delight they housed was one of Lenika’s favourite things to do in the Resource Room. And the best part of all was the small wooden stool the students could use to reach the upper level drawers. You never knew what you would find in the drawers. Once Lenika had discovered a shoebox full of money! There were coins and bills from all over the world, and she spent the entire lunch hour

organizing them into piles by country, and then by size, and then by the ones she liked best. She would daydream about being a world traveler, staying in different looking houses and meeting different looking people who would feed her different looking food.

Of course, she later found out that they were not actually real pieces of money. They were *almost* real, Giacinta told her. They were replicas.

The third highlight of the Resource Room was the costume bin. The costume bin was a big wooden chest, with a brass handle and little lock and key. Inside were clothes and accessories from all over the world. Playing dress-up was the greatest pastime of all, and whenever Lenika opened the costume bin she was brought back to her parents' closet in their home country when she was small. Her parents did not have a lot of money, but there was nevertheless an ample supply of high-heel shoes, dresses, bras, big baggy pants, and best of all, her father's overalls for her to play with. She was not actually *allowed* to play dress-up in her parents' closet, but on Saturday evenings when they went out dancing and her Aunt Maria came to babysit, Lenika got her heart's fill. Back then it had been Ana who played with her. Now it was Kristin.

The upper file cabinet drawers were usually where the girls began their adventures. This time, as soon as Giacinta had turned to go back to the front desk, Kristin dragged the little stool over to the file cabinet and climbed up to the highest drawer she could reach. She opened it, grinned, and called her friend over. Lenika squeezed onto the stool with Kristin, stepping on her toes, and peered inside the box. Her face transformed into pure sunshine.

"Espera, I get the game," Lenika tumbled off the stool and ran over to the desk beside the door and grabbed two sheets of paper with eight boxes printed on each. By that time, Kristin had begun extracting the contents of the box onto the woolly carpeted floor. They were dolls. Dolls from all over the world. At that moment, both Lenika and Kristin simultaneously forgot about ever having to return to class.

Chapter Twenty five

"I'll get it!" Lenika hollered as she flung herself down the stairs towards the front door, which had just knocked. Not Felipe, she uttered a shy, "Hello," and ran into the kitchen to inform her father that it was for him. Carlos dried his hands on a dishcloth and poked his head around the corner.

"Oh! Come in, please." It was the nextdoor neighbour, Grant O'Sullivan.

"Hi! How are you?" The two men shook hands.

"I offer you a cup of coffee?"

"Thank you." They made their way back into the kitchen and sat down at the island. It was a gorgeous spring morning, blue sky, warm breeze, and robins busy excavating the lawn for worms. Lenika was working on a project up in her room with Carla, but upon the arrival of the unannounced guest, she lingered around the kitchen table out of curiosity. Angel was making train noises in the living room where he sat in his pyjamas surrounded by toy cars and trucks and trains and boats.

"I wanted to stop by and ask your opinion on something, Carlos," Grant began. "Susanna and I went to a meeting last night at the Community Centre. It was an information session about Tove Elementary. That is where you go, isn't it?" Grant over-enunciated to Lenika. She nodded. "Do you like it there?" he asked. She nodded again.

"Veni aqui, Lenika," Carlos told his daughter, and she came over dutifully, recognizing the situation one where she was expected to participate more eagerly. "Tell Grant why you like Tove."

"Well," she took a deep breath, "is really fun. I learn the English for part of the day and the Espanish, but it don't feel, it *doesn't* feel that I learn it because we do other things at the same time. Like we learn on the environment." Her eyes began to twinkle.

"And are there a lot of English kids in your class?" Grant asked.

"Yes." She looked up at the ceiling and tried to name them off, "Kristin, Nathan, Jamie, Sarah, Josh, Sarah M,..."

"And do those kids like being at Tove too?"

She nodded. "Sometime Josh no is nice and Ms.Simpson say him to sit alone because he take my pencil. I like Kristin because she is my buddy. Ms.Simpson give us buddy to work with but Felipe have two buddy because there is no more *angofones*."

"So there are more Spanish kids than Anglophones in your class?"

"Yes but in Mr. Wallace class there is more *angofones* than Italian."

Grant turned to Carlos. "Susanna and I are considering sending Matthew to Tove in the fall. We have been discussing having him learn a second language while he is young. I wanted to see what you thought about the programme there."

"How it is for Anglophone children, you choose the language they learn?"

"Mhm, that's what the teachers were explaining last night at the meeting. Basically, when we choose to send a child there, we are given the option of the language he will study. For example, at Tove, I believe our choices are Spanish or Italian. Or we have the option of putting him in English-medium. Even if we were to do that, it is still a better choice than sending him to Honey, because of

the supported multilingual environment in the LIP schools. And plus, they get those Cultural Awareness classes for a couple of hours a day, which I think is great.

"But still, I think we want to put him in one of the two-way immersion classes. It most likely will be Italian, because Susanna is from an Italian background, and we want the kids to learn about their Italian heritage. Actually, sometimes I think she secretly wants us all to up and move to Italy!" He burst out in a laugh, "But I think this would be a good start for them. The curriculum is the same at all the schools, but it's the delivery." Grant slapped Carlos on the shoulder as he said that. "It's all about the delivery, eh man?!"

By this time Lenika had lost interest and had made her way back upstairs to Carla and the Bristol board and markers.

Carlos went on, "Well, I must say, we are very pleased with the results at Tove. Angel will start in the autumn also and will be in Massew's grade. They will walk at school together."

"That's right! So you think it is a good idea for us?"

"Yes, yes, a good idea. Your son will learn about the world, and when he is teenager he will already speak the both languages."

"Exactly. That's what we want."

Chapter Twenty six

During the science lesson that week, Ms.Simpson was showing the class how to build a volcano and make it explode by pouring vinegar into baking soda. As usual, she never actually explained anything. Rather, she had her students explain it to her. For this experiment, Jamie was particularly keen. His mother was a chemical engineer, and he had a cultivated interest in mixing and combining whatever he could get his hands on, just to see the reaction it might cause. Nothing, unfortunately, ever made much of a reaction. One year for his birthday his parents had gotten him a chemistry set, and even with that, the most that ever happened was the little test tube turned a strange colour. Like when he mixed a brown powder with a green liquid somehow the result was a pink mud. Once he had managed to make a potion that smoked. That was by far the coolest and the most successful experiment he had ever done. Around the house, of course, his parents kept all the chemical products hidden away out of his reach. They did not want him playing with detergents and cleaning products. Goodness knows what he would mix with what. But Jamie was a good kid, and a responsible one.

After a few good talks from his mother, and one major turning point when he got into something blue and turned the entire tub blue, not to mention his hands, Jamie had learned his lesson and now only pretended he was a mad scientist when his mother was present, and usually involved.

In school, he loved science. His vocabulary was more advanced than his classmates and sometimes Ms.Simpson would put him in charge of the lesson. Of course, she put him in charge of the *Spanish* lesson, which forced him to learn the terms for what he knew in Spanish. The rest of the class admired Jamie for this, and Ms.Simpson often observed other students checking their experiments with him before proceeding. That morning, Jamie was a great help to her as they carefully mixed the baking soda and vinegar.

The following morning was the English instruction half of the day. Ms.Simpson asked the whole class to gather around the great big globe she put on the table in the middle of the room. All the children immediately began spinning it and trying to point to their countries, and shouting that they had an aunt in *this* country and that their mother had been to *this* country. When they were sufficiently worked up, Ms.Simpson reached over their heads and stopped the whirlwind in the middle of the table.

"Now," she said, "What country are we in right now?"

"Canada!" They all shouted.

"Right. Who was born in Canada?" A dozen or so hands shot up. Ms.Simpson wrote Canada on the blackboard.

"Lucia, would you please write your country's name on the chalkboard?"

Lucia, a large Columbian girl with ringlets hanging over her shoulders shuffled up to the chalkboard and wrote in thick block letters "COLOMBIA." Next, Carla. "Republica Dominicana." Ms.Simpson handed the chalk to Felipe. "Mexico." Then to Ahmed "Filipinas." Once everyone in the class had written their country on the board, Ms.Simpson told them they were going to make an atlas.

Felipe asked out loud, "What is atlas?"

About 20 voices sang back, "UN ATLAS!!" Then they all laughed.

Felipe said, "oh."

Ms.Simpson said, "Si. Vamos a hacer un atlas juntos."

And right away, the chorus of voices rang out, "English Ms.Simpson!"

"Oh yes, you are right."

And so it was, the grade 5 two-way Spanish class at Tove Elementary set earnestly to work that April morning to produce and publish the school's first bilingual atlas of the Spanish speaking world. In fact, all the grade 5 classes were doing the same for their languages, and at the end, Ms.Simpson told

her students, they were going to put them all together and everyone was going to get a copy to take home to their families for the summer. The kids cheered when they heard this news.

“It will be my first atlas!” exclaimed Nathan.

The beaming faces scurried around the room gathering the art supplies needed for their project, and those whose instinct was immediately to consult the internet had already thought to sign up for the computer station. Their task was to research their countries in books and on-line to learn the information they did not already know. They each had a list of information they were required to find out about. The group in the corner that housed Lenika, Kristin, Felipe, Nathan and Jamie had decided to have a communal resources pile in the middle of the five desks. They had each brought over colouring supplies and scissors and glue, but once that was all set, it occurred to Kristin that they had not brought any books over. They were seated and ready to begin when she brought this to their attention. It is hard to say who thought of the Resource Room first, but it didn't take long before the group was huddled in front of Ms.Simpson's desk to ask if they could go to the library. When she said they could, they each grabbed passes and rushed out of the room. Jamie lingered behind.

“Can I do Cuba, Ms.Simpson? Nobody is from Cuba in our class, but they speak Spanish there. I know they do because my parents went on a trip there. They brought me back a t-shirt with the flag in the middle of it.” He looked down at the t-shirt he was wearing. It was not the right one, but he made a square on his chest to show her where the flag was on the other t-shirt. She would be delighted if he did a page on Cuba. If he needed any help, she would gladly be his partner. He smiled, grabbed a pass, and ran to catch up with his friends.

PART THREE

Chapter One

When Maria collected the mail from the mailbox one sunny Tuesday morning, as usual Lenika came running to help her read anything she could not read on her own. It was remarkable how fluent her daughter's English was becoming. Needless to say, Lenika had not acquired the vocabulary to decipher bills and bank statements, but Maria could certainly not get on without her. This morning there was a brown envelope with elaborate postage sitting among the pile of junk mail on the kitchen

table. The two of them spotted it almost simultaneously and both gasped as they grabbed for it. It was from Jose, Carlos' brother back in their home country. As Lenika tore it open, Maria called to Carlos who was reading to Angel in the living room.

"Una carta de Jose!" she exclaimed. Carlos came hurrying into the kitchen with Angel in his arms. They all listened as Lenika read.

Queridos hermanos; Luis y Carlos,

I have some news for you that I know you are not expecting, and I know you will not approve. Alina and I have decided to emigrate to Canada, and our papers are being processed. You have asked me to stay and look after papá, but I can no longer be of use here. The winter was hard on him, as you know, and his condition has worsened. The doctors say they do not know what is causing the pain.

I have been accepted to continue my studies at the medical school in Huerto de Vega and will begin next week. I will only do a couple months, though, as we hope to leave for Canada this summer. The commute to Huerto de Vega will be long, but the facilities are better than here. What I really want is to complete my degree in Canada. The schools there will allow me to continue where I leave off here, and my plan is to return home to papá once I am fully trained. I want to practice medicine here, even if Monika will stay in Canada. She is not upset over our decision to emigrate, although we think she does realize what it means she is leaving behind. She has already begun making goodbye gifts for her friends, and she is taking it very seriously.

Please, try and understand that I cannot stay here. You both left before papá fell ill and have not had to bear the hardship as closely as the rest of us. I cannot watch him suffer when there is nothing I can do. If I had the skills I could treat him and provide him with the care he needs. But I will not get any further ahead if I stay here. The medical school here is not adequate, you have seen it, and although the one in Huerto de Vega is an improvement, it is only tolerable. It will further me along but there is simply not enough equipment or supplies for me to get the quality of education that I want. We will leave for Canada as soon as it all goes through.

Alina and Monika send their love, and I promise to be in touch as soon as we hear anything. Do not worry for papá. Mamá is well and we are doing our best to keep our minds healthy although our hearts are heavy. We miss you,

Jose

The family was quiet for a moment. Maria and Carlos had not told Lenika or Angel that their grandfather was sick. They did not want to worry them, and as they did not know what it was nor how serious it was, they had chosen to wait before discussing it with the children.

"Abuelito is sick?" Lenika asked, her big brown eyes filling with water. Maria took her onto her lap and told her that they did not know what it was, but that uncle Jose was taking good care of him. Carlos diverted the conversation.

"Did you hear that, my love? Monika is going to be coming to live in Canada. She will need a role model, just like you had Elisa. She will look up to you right from the very beginning. You will have to teach her everything that you have learned about living in Canada, because it will be difficult for her." He looked at his little boy, "You too, Angel." Carlos' eyes crossed Maria's, and they were silent again.

"Luis, recibiste la carta de Jose?" Carlos was on the phone that night.

"Si. I can't believe it. Leaving papá." Luis sounded upset. "He promised us he would look after him. How dare he leave just to further his own ambitions."

Carlos sighed, "But he is furthering his own ambitions in order to go back and take care of papá. He said he wants to practice in our country, not in Canada."

"You know as well as I do that he will not leave once he gets here and sees the better life he can live and the better life for his family. You know damn well he will not go back and look after papá. He is abandoning him, that's what he is doing. Does he really think we are going to believe that he will leave his wife and daughter and go back there to look after a dying man? No. He cannot come to Canada."

"But Monika, she will have more opportunity here, just like our children. How can you wish him to remain in a country frozen in economical slums that we ourselves would not endure? He wants to be a doctor, Luis, and you know what he says is true about the schools in our towns. They are run down, under equipped, how can we tell him to stay there. Papá would not want him to stay either. Papá is surely encouraging his emigration. For Monika, more than for anyone else."

Luis thought for a moment and then the two of them lapsed into a long drawn out discussion about the illness of their father. Whether or not they supported their eldest brother's emigration was put on hold. And what did it matter? Jose was already decided. They concluded, ultimately, that they had best do their part to make the immigration as smooth for their brother's family as possible. Maria and Carlos began to put aside whatever spare pennies they could, although it did not amount to much. They knew that it would have to be Luis and Carmen who sent the more helpful sum.

For the kids, the immigration was great news! Lenika set off immediately to write to her little cousin. They were close in age, as Jose's wife Alina had miscarried twice before finally having Monika. By that time both Luis and Carlos had had children and Monika was born only two years after Lenika. All three girls had grown up together before Luis' family emigrated. Angel had been spoiled, especially by grandparents on both sides, being the only male grandson.

Although he did not understand anything beyond the fact that his uncle Jose's family was coming to Canada soon, Angel followed Lenika around as she rambled on about what they were to do to prepare for their cousin's arrival. She assigned them each tasks, and Angel complied with his sister's every instruction.

First, Lenika declared, they were going to look through the pictures they had taken since they arrived in Canada and write on the back where everything was. This would, of course, make it easier for Monika to find the library, the Culture Centre, and the school, when she arrived. Whether or not Monika would be living anywhere near Ambury, Lenika did not consider. Angel's job was to make sure the piles of photos that Lenika sorted stayed nice and neat. He tried to demand more rights in the distribution of tasks, but Lenika said that his job was very important. He pouted for a minute and flung a pile of photos on the ground. She relented and allowed him to print a number on the back of every photo.

This task took most of the weekend, and when Sunday evening arrived, the two of them had made a photo album of their Canadian city and were stuffing it into an envelope to mail home to their cousin.

"Can I put the stamp on?" Angel asked. Before Lenika could answer, Maria intercepted and stated that they would have to take it to the post office to be weighed. So *neither* of them could put the stamp on. She eyed Lenika.

At school, Lenika and Kristin and Felipe spent their recesses and lunch hours busily drawing out maps of the city. Felipe managed the route from the Costas' house to Tove Elementary (not forgetting the duck pond) and Kristin took care of the route between her house and the Costas'. When Lenika volunteered with Miki in Mr. Tremblay's class on Thursday, the two of them worked on a trilingual dictionary for Monika.

"Watashi no cousin mo Canada ni sundeiru," Miki informed Lenika.

But the best news of all came two weeks later when her father received another brown envelope in the mail. This one announced that Jose and his family would be arriving in Toronto on June 20th, sooner than expected. Their plans were to stay there until the transfer documents were in place for him to carry on his studies at the University of Western Ontario. He had already applied for the federal

government's Bursary for Higher Education, and citizens, landed immigrants, and refugees were very rarely refused the money if they earned under a certain income. This confirmed to Lenika that her cousin would be living close by. She was glittery the rest of the evening.

"Lenika, sabes, although Monika will just miss your birthday by a few weeks, why don't you organize a party with all your friends when she arrives?" suggested Maria one day as she sat in her daughter's bedroom, braiding her hair. "You could invite them over here and introduce them to Monika and I will make food and you can have the back yard. It will be even warmer then, and I am sure Monika would enjoy Ambury once all the leaves are out and the flowers have blossomed."

Lenika looked at her mother in the mirror and her eyes danced. She smiled and giggled then nodded her head furiously until her mother had to restart the braid. Lenika began instantly to plan the party in her imagination.

Chapter Two

There were only a few weeks left in the school year, and the projects that Ms.Simpson's class had been working on for months were coming to a close. The most important one, of course, was the resource book. The resource book was going to be a compilation of many smaller projects the students had completed throughout the year. It would be available in the office for new families arriving in Tove Elementary next year, and would make their introduction to city and school life in Canada easier. The table of contents at the beginning of the resource book was impressive. It included 'Finding your way around Tove', 'Festivities: Month by Month', 'Where can I find...', 'Where do Tove students come from?', and many other chapter headings.

Saturday after swimming Lenika walked over to Carla's house where the kids in her group were meeting to finish their photograph section. This had been Lenika's idea. Her father had brought her home a real snap-shot camera one day a few weeks ago, and it had not left her side. Carlos had picked it up at a garage sale. The man had bought a new digital camera and this one was no use to him anymore. It was perfect, however, for Lenika. Although her parents did not have the money to develop all the pictures she took right away, they promised her that she could get one roll developed each month. The month of May had been dedicated to pictures for the resource book. She took pictures of her classmates, her teachers, and her school with all its special features, best of all, Furry the catfish.

Yesterday, Lenika had finally gotten back the envelope with the developed pictures inside, and she was taking them to Carla's to show her friends. When the swim instructor blew the whistle, Lenika hopped out of the pool and walked as quickly as possible to the change room where she ran into Sally, a tall black girl who was in her class but who hardly ever said anything. Lenika had tried Spanish, English, and even the little bit she knew of Japanese from volunteering with Miki, but Sally only smiled timidly while she tried to get changed into her dry clothes with a towel wrapped around her dripping hair.

Sally laughed when Lenika was caught in her t-shirt, and stopped brushing her own hair in order to help out her little friend. Then Lenika showed her the pictures of Tove. Sally was in an English-medium class at Woodthorn Elementary. Her first language was French but when she finally responded to Lenika, it was in English. The fact was, she was fully trilingual, and depending on who she was with, she chose between English, French, or Trinidadian Creole. Sally held Lenika's bag for her as she tied her shoes.

Lenika met her brother in the hallway and walked with him to the parking lot where they always waited for their mother or father to meet them to walk home. Lenika was impatient this particular morning.

"Y *despues*, we had to splash like we were ducks y *despues* we had to float on our backs y *despues*..."

"Angel, there's papá. You can tell him about it, ok?" She gave her father a kiss when he reached them, then she was off in a gallop towards Carla's.

"What time are you coming home?" Carlos shouted after her.

"I don't know. I will call," she smiled, and he let it go.

Chapter Three

It was sunny out, finally, after what felt like weeks of rain. The worst of the rain was supposed to be over, but here they were, middle of July, and it was raining. The Costas could hardly believe how green the city had become. They tried their hardest, but none of them could recall Ambury being as green and leafy and flowery when they first arrived almost a year ago. Maybe, Lenika suggested, *they* had not been as leafy and flowery back then. One thing was certainly the same, and that was the rabbit family at the library. Angel was sure they were the very same family of rabbits that had made their home under the pine tree last summer. In fact, he was *positive* he recognized the mother.

Carlos was on the phone with Jose who was down the road in London trying to figure out when Jose and his family were going to come to Ambury for a visit. Alina was taking summer English classes at the college and they began this week, but perhaps Monday they would all take the bus out. That sounded good.

And so early Monday morning Jose, Alina and Monika manoeuvred their way to Ambury and were greeted at the central bus station by four very excited faces. The girls threw themselves into each others arms and Lenika squeezed her cousin so hard she shrieked. Alina and Maria were wiping the tears from their cheeks as they touched each other's hair and faces and arms, appreciating the way the other had become even more beautiful since they had last been together. It was evident, too, that Alina was pregnant. Maria expressed her surprise and delight, and called her kids over to see Alina's tummy. After Lenika let go of Monika, Angel grabbed a hold of his cousin's waist and she hugged him back. Then the three of them put their arms around each other and began twirling around and around.

Carlos and Jose had broken out into enormously wide grins and had each other in an embrace possible only between brothers reuniting. Both being broad shouldered and somewhat stout, their arms barely reached around the other's back. They were still locked and grinning after the rest of the family had said their hellos. Finally they greeted the others and eventually everyone was ready to leave. The whole way back the kids were yakking away in a Spanish incomprehensible outside the Costa cousinship. A Spanish that had been extinct for a year and was at that very moment being reborn without a care in the world. Fast, crowded, shimmery, like a song.

At home, the adults made coffee and then went out to the back yard to sit on the plastic chairs. Jose lit a cigarette and made a flabbergasted remark to his brother about the price of tobacco in Canada. Actually, comparisons between prices and practices pretty well dominated their conversation for the next couple of hours. Meanwhile, the kids were at the back of the garden sitting in the flower patch that Maria had planted not so long ago. They weren't supposed to sit *in* the flower patch, but that feeling of being able to get away with anything that only arose once or twice a year had captured them, and there they sat, right in the dirt, surrounded by roses, daisies, and impatiens.

Angel had been invited nextdoor to play with Matty O'Sullivan and when he saw the mass of red curls come wandering down the back steps next door, he jumped up and squeezed through the hole that had formed in the thick ivy partition. Maria introduced Susanna over the vines to Jose and Alina, then called to Angel to be home for lunch. The girls, giddy because they were alone now and had the chance to have a serious talk, sat crossed-legged in the garden with their knees touching.

"But mamá says I have to go to an all-English school because she wants me to learn English and since you get to speak Spanish at the LIP school she says she doesn't want me to go there. She

says that since I have to live in English now, I might as well get used to it. Then I heard her talking to Elisa and she was getting angry because Elisa was trying to tell her that I would learn English faster if I could study Spanish at the same time cause languages help each other out in the brain or something like that. She didn't believe Elisa so I think I have to go to the English school even though there are only *two* left in the whole city. Everything is moving toward LIP and I have to take a school bus across the city to get to the English school when everyone in the neighbourhood just walks down the street to the LIP school." Monika shrugged and looked down at the ground with her bottom lip puffed out. Lenika could tell she was not happy with the arrangement.

"Elisa is right, *sabes*. It's true that the more you learn in different languages the easier it becomes to learn new ones because the knowledge transfers. Like a balloon in the brain. When you blow into it in any language it still inflates. There are not separate balloons for each language!"

"Mamá doesn't believe it. And I keep telling her, *pues*, if it isn't true, then why are they closing all the schools down that don't allow kids to learn in their first languages, and why did Aunt Maria and Uncle Carlos put Lenika in bilingual education? That's what I keep telling her but she just keeps saying that in Canada they speak English or French but everywhere I go I hear a whole bunch of languages being spoken not just those two, and actually I hear other languages spoken almost *more* than those two!"

"Mhm. Most people here speak more than one language. Actually, I don't really know too many people who still only speak one. Just Jenny and Billy and my old teachers at Honey. They're mono-Anglos. But people who can only speak one get laughed at a lot. It really is pretty inexcusable. Not like it used to be when my teacher Ms. Simpson was a kid. Around the new millennium. People then didn't think it was that odd to be monolingual but now it would just be embarrassing! Jenny and Billy used to laugh at me cause I couldn't understand them when I first got here but then I realised that they were pretty *spécial*. That's what Kristin's sister Meghan's friend France always says. *Spécial*. It means they are kind of pathetic." The two girls giggled. Then Monika noticed her mother waving at them to come inside to get lunch ready.

That evening, Lenika told Monika about the party she was having on the weekend to introduce her to all the new friends she had made in Ambury. Even though Monika was going to live in London, it was close enough that they would be visiting often and so, she explained, she wanted Monika to meet Kristin and Felipe and Carla and everyone. Monika was excited and said that her mother had allowed her to bring her pink dress from home in case there were any special occasions, and *this* was certainly a special occasion. Then she drew a picture of the dress for Lenika. It had long sleeves and little wavy cuffs. Then Lenika drew a dress. Angel was bored so he went to play with his trains.

In the morning the girls asked if they could walk to the bus station instead of taking the bus with the rest of them. It was not hard to get there, straight down Wellington, past the movie theatre. They set off, and almost right away Lenika could see that something was bothering Monika. "What is it?" she asked. Her cousin burst into tears. Lenika kept walking, but slowly, and put her hand on Monika's back.

"Lenika, I *hate* it here," she said between sobs. They reached a small park with a bench and sat down. Lenika listened to Monika try and tell why she hated it here but it was hard because she was snivelling and sniffing so much. They had stayed with uncle Luis for only about a week before moving to London, and it sounded to Lenika like her cousin was going through a pretty rough patch of homesickness. Lenika thought back to her first couple of months in Canada and she remembered how much she had cried and how difficult it had been for her. She realised that it was Elisa that had gotten her through it in a lot of ways, and she made up her mind to be to Monika what Elisa had been to her.

"I know. It was hard for me too. Everything is so different."

"Everything is so *big* and so *loud* and so *fast*," sniff, "and the people next door only speak English and Chinese and they are nice but I can't understand anything."

"I remember what it feels like. I had no friends at the beginning."

"I have no friends because all my friends are back home. They couldn't come. Sofia wanted to come too but her mother said she had to stay. *None* of them could come."

Lenika kept rubbing her back. A rollerblader screamed past them and the breeze made Lenika's hair blow back. She looked at Monika. It was remarkable how much she reminded her of herself not so long ago. Had it really been a year? Canada had come to mean so much to her. She had found a new life here and now she was somebody new. She had taken the Lenika from her home country and metamorphosed that girl into a Canadian girl, but that Lenika from before had not faded. She was a true and proud cultural hybrid. Her English was improving all the time, and so was her Spanish. She could read the grownup books that her parents had brought, although most of them, she found, were pretty unexciting. But she could take out more chapter books from the library in Spanish, and now in English she was reading above her age level. Funny thing was, it wasn't even all that hard anymore.

There were still, of course, many days when she thought about back home and everything and everyone that used to be a part of her life. She wondered what Ana was doing, she wondered if she would ever see Juan again. And she thought about her grandparents a lot. She remembered how abuela had told her a few weeks before they left for Canada that she had never been outside of their country in her whole entire life and she was 71 years old! It didn't seem that interesting to Lenika at

the time, for, she herself had not been out of the country either. What even was there outside of their country? But now when she thinks about abuela making coffee in the morning, going out in her long skirt and long sweater to the market every afternoon, and washing the vegetables and the fish with her old wrinkly hands every evening, she wanted so badly to show her the new country she called home.

But most of all, Lenika realized that she *could* call both places home. She belonged in both equally. She loved both equally. She didn't have to choose between which Lenika she wanted to be. There was always something or someone that brought out the old Lenika and other things that brought out the new Lenika. She loved the feeling that both sides of her were growing and blending more and more every day. English Lenika, Spanish Lenika, Spanglish Lenika. She was happy. It dawned on her that very afternoon as she sat and watched the rollerblader whip past and felt her hair blow back from her face and her cousin sat right beside her, at *her* new beginning, she was happy.

Appendix

P. 10 Intuitively, an all-English school seems best:

Cummins and Swain (1986)

P. 13 Government sponsored English language classes:

The Heritage Language Programmes have been in place in Ontario since 1977: Cummins, 2001; Tse, 2001; Brutt-Griffler & Makoni, 2005; Burnaby, (1998). Similar programmes also exist in other provinces.

P. 14 Parental support for the LIP schools:

It is important to have popular support for language programmes (such as the one presented in this thesis) in order to ensure their survival: Shaw, 2003

P. 15 Greece example:

Tse, 2001, p.47

P. 18 Policy is never neutral nor objective:

Pennycook, 2001; Chomsky, 2004; Shohamy, 2006; Macedo et al., 2003; Phillipson, 1992

Teachers bring their biases to class:

Kincheloe, 2005b; Cummins & Miramontes, 2006

Language as a tool for control:

Shohamy, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tollefson, 2002; Ovando & Pérez, 2000

P. 19 Immigrants do learn English well:

Tse, 2001

Division of rich and poor:

The Toronto Community Foundation indicates that "If your family is non-European in origin, your poverty rate is more than double that of groups with European or Canadian origin. Nearly half of all families from African and the Caribbean, the Arab and West Asian countries live in poverty, while 62% of Somali families, 70% of Ethiopian, and 87% of Toronto's Ghanaian families live below the poverty line...The median income for couple families in Toronto's 12 wealthiest neighbourhoods rose from \$129,000 in 1995 to \$161,625 in 2001, a gain of over 25%...The median income for couple families in Toronto's 12 poorest neighbourhoods fell from \$32,651 in 1995 to \$29,950 in 2001, a loss of 8%."

Kozol, 1992

Teachers as soldiers of the system:

Shohamy, 2006

P. 20 Teachers being part of the system design process:

Eggington, 1997b; Gandara et al., 2005

P. 21

English is the language of this country:

It is an overgeneralization to call Canada an English-speaking country:
Eggington & Wren, 1997a; Cumming, 1997

P. 22

English is a language of prestige:

de Mejía, 2002

Singapore: Dixon, 2003

Ghana: Wilmot, 2002

Japan: Wakabayashi, 2002

Peru: Niño-Murcia, 2003

Middle East: Karmani, 2005

Attitude that we are doing immigrants a favour:

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000

Global spread of English:

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) cites a Japanese critic of English language imperialism in Japan who says that English is in the position "as the most dominant international language preventing the linguistic and cultural self-determination of the speakers of other languages"(p.303). Furthermore, she believes that the notion of languages 'disappearing' suggests some natural or voluntary shift that is inevitable and agentless, when really the death of many languages is a result of linguistic genocide (the act of killing a language without killing the speakers) (p.314).

May, 2001; Gray, 1997; Bryson, 2001

P. 24

Globe and Mail article:

Peritz, 2006

P. 25

Hegemony: Shohamy (2006) cites Fairclough who explains that "dominant classes exercise power in two basic ways, through coercion and consent, either by forcing others to go along with them or by convincing them that it is in their best interests"(p.145). The latter way is hegemonic, or ideological control.

Chomsky, 2004; Phillipson, 1992; May, 2001; Macedo et al., 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005a

P. 29

Controlling and re-writing history:

Chomsky (2004) says in a 1984 interview:

History is owned by the educated classes. They are the people who are the custodians of history. They are the ones who are in universities and throughout the whole system of constructing, shaping and presenting to us the past as they want it to be seen. These are the groups that are closely associated with power. They themselves have a high degree of privilege and access to power. They share class interests with those who control and in fact own the economic

system. They are the cultural commissars of the system of domination and control that's very pervasive. (p.480)

Eberts, J. et al., 1997

- P. 34** **Call for improved teacher training (the base of the L2 year set-up):**
Wilmot, 2002; Cummins & Miramontes, 2006; Eggington & Wren, 1997; Shohamy, 2006; Genesee & Gandara, 1999, Edwards, 1998; Cummins & Schecter, 2003
- P. 41** **Feeling invisible and mute:**
Eva Hoffman (1990) describes a similar feeling throughout her immigration first to Canada and then to the United States, in her book *Lost in Translation*. She says "Because I'm not heard, I feel I'm not seen" (p.147).
- P. 48** **Banking system:**
Freire, 2005; Cummins & Miramontes, 2006
- P. 49** **Tuning out when not understanding:**
Macedo et al., 2003; Lessow-Hurley, 2005
- P. 51** **Coaching:**
Gandara, et al. (2005) show that several focus group teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels said that they would like to see collaboration as a central part of their professional development. These teachers expressed a desire and need to observe successful teachers, collaborate and plan with their colleagues, and establish coaching relationships in an ongoing manner rather than 'one shot' (p.15).
- P. 55** **Wishing she was born in Canada:**
Hoffman, 1990
- P. 57** **Immigration experience different for adults and children:**
Thomas & Collier, 1997
- P. 59** **Talking, holding meetings, finding support:**
Corson (1997) says that "the best way to change the structures that affect action in human affairs is to change the discourse about those structures" (p.149). He goes on to encourage teachers to consider social justice more carefully within their teaching practices, especially regarding the use of English in a Canadian classroom. He believes that by being involved in dialogue around anti-bias pedagogy he is promoting reform and thus indirectly challenging national policies.
- P. 62** **Brains have innate capacity for language:**
Chomsky, 2004
- Badminton example:** Tse, 2001, p.45
- P. 64** **Minority groups seeking recognition:**
Shohamy (2006) writes of a battle currently taking place in many countries between minority groups seeking recognition, self-expression and mobility, and those in

authority eager to maintain homogenous ideologies in relation to languages. She says "it is in the current political environment, where nation-states are becoming more diverse, multilingual, transnational, multinational and global, that language is used as a major tool for political, social and economic manipulations in the midst of these battles" (p.46).

P. 65

Enhancing the status of a language:

Lessow-Hurley (2005) believes that "In order for bilingual programs to succeed, schools must promote the idea that the language children bring to school is prestigious and appropriate for use by educated people"(p.78)

P. 68

Schools as perpetuators of the status quo:

Pattanayak, 2000; Genesee 1994; Corson, 1997; Macedo et al., 2003

Education Models:

Shohamy (2006) describes an *assimilative* model as one in which minority groups were expected to give up their knowledges in exchange for the knowledge ways of the dominant group. A *recognition* model implies that there is appreciation and acknowledgement of different epistemologies, and groups are encouraged to cultivate their different knowledges, at least temporarily. Finally, current models are *interactive* models because "...the knowledge of the minority groups is seen to affect that of the dominant group and enrich it in a two-way interaction...[T]he knowledge must be...perceived as important 'funds of knowledge' for the society as a whole"(p.97). She also notes that it is still the assimilative model in practice in many societies today.

P. 70

Children's cultural capital as learning base:

Schechter & Cummins, 2003; Kincheloe, 2005a; McKeon, 1994; Edwards, 1998.

Understanding and drawing on various cultural communities:

Kincheloe (2005) says:

As part of their role as researchers and knowledge workers, teachers study the community surrounding the school for a variety of reasons. In addition to understanding the social and cultural context that immediately surrounds the school, such research enables collaborative efforts with various community members. The integration of school pedagogies with community and institutional expertise is an important aspect of rigorous teacher activity and educational reform. (p.71)

Genesee, 1994

Educators and students exercising agency over curriculum:

Schechter et al., 2003

Ideology:

Kincheloe, 2005, defines ideologies and says that a "traditional definition involves systems of beliefs. In a critical theoretical context ideology involves meaning that supports form of dominant power" (p. 43).

Gonzalez & Arnot-Hopffer, 2003

P. 71 Community-referenced learning projects:
Schechter & Cummins (2003)

P. 73 Cultural Awareness (based on):
Chow & Cummins, 2003; Crawford, 2000a; Sarkar, 2005; Shohamy, 2006; Edwards, 1998

P. 76 Cannot separate language from context:
Genesee, 1994; McKeon, 1994

P. 77 English language as a gatekeeper:
Shohamy, 2006; Niño-Murcia, 2003

An English teacher not just one who speaks English:
Lessow-Hurley, 2005

Suggestopedia, Notional-Functional Approach:
Lessow-Hurley, 2005

Creating appropriate and authentic learning environment:
Genesee, 1994; Freire, 2005; Hudelson, 1994; Met, 1994

Puppy example:
McKeon, 1994, p.27

Quebec population:
Statistics Canada, 2006

P. 84 Confusing L2 learning process with special needs:
Genesee, 1994

The problem being she thinks in Spanish:
Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tse, 2001

P. 85 A common unifying language:
Shohamy, 2006; Ramirez, 2002

Language as factor for determining success:
Tse, 2001

P. 86 Policy should allow minority students to learn English while not detracting from their learning the curriculum material:
Met, 1994; Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001

P. 87 Transnational world:
Shohamy, 2006, p.82

- P. 91** **Making friends:**
Hoffman, 1990, p.119
- P. 92** **Mrs.Taylor told Lenika not to forget her form:**
Hoffman (1990) remarks that cultural assumptions are invisible by members of the same culture because they are shared (p.210).
- P. 100** **Most of world's population is bilingual:**
Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000
- Cognitive benefits:**
Tse, 2001; Cummins & Swain, 1986
- Our economy loses out:**
Rassool, 2004
- P. 102** **Language as a problem, a right, or a resource:**
According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), for minorities to exercise their fundamental human rights, they need to become at least bilingual (p.569). She divides fundamental human rights into two categories, both of which must be fulfilled in order for an individual to live a dignified life. The first is somatic needs, where she includes security (as opposed to violence), and well-being (as opposed to misery). The second is mental needs, where she includes freedom (as opposed to repression), and identity (as opposed to alienation). Education is part of well-being and identity, and a prerequisite for security and freedom (p.469).
- Shaw, 2003
- Languages disappearing:**
Michael Krauss (as cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) estimates that the number of languages that will for sure be around in the year 2100 is only around 600, less than 10% of the present world languages (p.47).
- May, 2001
- P. 103** **Quotation:**
Uriel Weinreich, 1945
- P. 104** **Charter of Rights and Freedoms:**
Sarkar, 2005
- Reversing discriminatory patterns:**
Cummins & Schecter, 2003, p. 4
- P. 105** **Donaldo DeDiego:**
Thomas and Collier (1997) write that in general, they "have found that the school buildings with the strongest sociocultural support for language minority students are

those that produce student graduates that are among the highest academic achievers in each school district”(p.80).

P. 109

Canada statistics:

Prediction based on immigration statistics over past three censuses.

40 langs in a school:

Schechter & Cummins, 2003, p.19

P. 114

Pull-out ESL:

McKeon, 1994

P. 115

BICS and CALP/ context embedded and context reduced:

Cummins, 1999; Cummins & Schechter, 2003; Wakabayashi, 2002

P. 116

How long it takes to learn a language:

Hudelson, 1994; Lessow-Hurley, 2005; Wakabayashi, 2002; Shohamy, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Cummins, 1994

P. 122

The concept of the **Language Inclusive Programme** schools is based on research conducted in the field of bilingual education. The foundation of the LIP policy is that using a child's L1 as the medium or one of the media of instruction will not interfere with her acquisition of an L2. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence that maintaining and further developing the L1 has both cognitive and academic benefits for the child and will ultimately aid in learning a new language. The following is a partial list of sources from which my formation of the LIP policy developed. See bibliography for complete list.

Thomas & Collier, 1997; Ramirez, 2002; Crawford, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Eggington & Wren, 1997; Lessow-Hurley, 2005; Cummins & Swain, 1986
Corson, 1995; Phillipson, 1992; Met, 1994

Phillipson (1992) describes five fallacies in the education of dominated communities. They have all been scientifically proven false, but have long guided much indigenous and immigrant minority education all over the world. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) adds a sixth fallacy to the list, which she calls the segregation fallacy. It states, “if minorities are taught in their own groups or classes or schools, especially through the medium of their own languages, this prevents integration and leads to/is segregation, ghettoisation”(p.576). This is simply false, she claims. In fact, like most of the fallacies around minority education, the very opposite is true. Many immigrant or language minority students in Canada, for example, would benefit, in their first years of schooling, from a separate class in which the medium of instruction is their native language.

P. 124

The **English-medium** classes are inspired by ideas from Cummins, 1991; Cummins, 2000; Edwards, 1998; Sale, Sliz, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2003

Educating about the value of bilingual instruction:

Ovando & McLaren, 2000; Tse, 2001

- P. 129** **Common Underlying Proficiency & Separate Underlying Proficiency:**
Cummins & Swain, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Lessow-Hurley, 2005
- Maximum exposure theory:**
Cummins & Swain, 1986, p. 80
- P. 130** **Group A, group B example:**
Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p.576
- P. 131** **Both-and vs either-or:**
O'Grady & Chappell, 2000; Cummins, 1999
- P. 132** **Study:**
Crawford, 2000, p.112
- Dividing families:**
Ramirez, 2002
- Quotation:**
Malcolm X, 1965
- P. 136** **Universal Declaration of Human Rights:**
<http://www.linguistic-declaration.org/decl-gb.htm>
- Ogbu:**
Ogbu, 2001
- P. 137** **The entire country benefiting from a multilingual population:**
Tse (2001) says about America that "this language loss across generations is, in my opinion, one of the most fundamental erosions of a national resource in this country" (p.30)
- Cummins, 2001; Shohamy, 2006, p.151; Corson, 1997; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 578
- P. 138** **Oppressor's thoughts:**
Skutnabb-kangas, 2000, p.266
Author's note: Language policy, of course, does not always work in harmful ways. Often policies are put in place to protect languages. However, I would argue that even when implemented with good intentions, such as for the protection of a people and their culture (for example, Bill 101 in Quebec), because language policies are, by definition, government ways of controlling who speaks what language and where, they will *always* be controversial and there will be groups of people who are disadvantaged because of them unless they are all-inclusive and serve to *expand* language use rather than limit it.
- Orwell:**
Orwell, 1973, pp.241-242
- Chomsky:**

Chomsky, 2004, pp. 608-609

P. 139

Fitting the dominant mould:

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000

Hongkong:

Pennycook, 1998

P. 140

Counterweight to hegemony:

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000

Parent and community involvement:

Wiley & Wright, 2004; Genesee, 1994

P. 143

Critical constructivism:

Kincheloe, 2005a;

P. 144

Providing the same for everyone:

Ramirez (2002) addresses the argument that since it would be impossible to provide all language minority children with a language inclusive policy, it is not fair to provide it for only some. He scoffs at this and says, "This is absurd...this position is tantamount to saying, 'Because there are not enough heart donors to meet the needs of all the patients in need of a heart transplant, we therefore should prohibit all heart transplants'"(p.180).

Positions of power threatened:

Shohamy (2006) writes, "Those in power will never be enthusiastic about receiving new people, not just because of discrimination, but also because they fear that those 'others' will violate their system" (p.150).

Bilingual education costs too much:

Cumming, 1997; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Coulombe, 1995

Two American studies conducted in 1983 by RAND Corporation for Congress, and in 1992 by BW Associates for the California state Legislature, that reported that most districts in America do not pay bilingual teachers more than non-bilingual teachers and the cost of providing books and other learning materials for multilingual classrooms does not differ from that of English-only classrooms. Crawford (1998) reports on the latter study and writes:

A study commissioned by the California legislature examined a variety of well implemented program models and found no budgetary advantage for English-only approaches. The incremental cost was about the same each year (\$175-\$214) for bilingual and English immersion programs, as compared with \$1,198 for English as a second language (ESL) "pullout" programs. The reason was simple: the pullout approach requires supplemental teachers, whereas in-class approaches do not (pp.4-5).

Thomas and Collier (1997) report that two-way bilingual education in which all students may participate (mainstream, grade-level model of schooling) is the most cost-effective

model of bilingual education because add-on services do not need to be provided by extra staff.

P. 145

Diversity healthier than homogeneity:

“Forcing this cultural and linguistic conversion on indigenous and other traditional peoples not only violates their human rights, but also undermines the health of the world's ecosystems and the goals of nature conservation.”

Terralingua, n.d.

Retraining monolinguals is more expensive:

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tse, 2001

P. 148

Registration process at Tove:

Inspired by Solomon & Ippolito, 2003

P. 153

Testing:

Schechter et al., 2003

P. 162

Repertoire and frog example:

Genesee, 1994, p.172

P. 163

Teachers as researchers:

Kincheloe, 2005a

Transmitters of culture and values:

Genesee, 1994

General lesson:

Commins & Miramontes, 2006 p 244

P. 165

Lenika as translator:

Tse (2001) discusses the ability of many immigrant children to interpret for their parents and how standardized tests do not account for such skills. She calls this skill ‘language brokering’ and says that “conducting such tasks require sophisticated linguistic, cultural, and cognitive skill” (p.23)

Shohamy, 2006

P. 167

Notion that English guarantees a better future:

Niño-Murcia, 2003

P. 168

English unites us:

Having a language to unite the country is a popular argument from critics of bilingual education. As many authors explain, however, requiring a multicultural and multilingual population to assimilate to one language (the language of the power elite) fragments people rather than unites them (see Macedo et al., 2003). Homogenizing policies which foster such a belief in ‘one-language-one-nation’ exclude differences and entail a fear of the Other. Furthermore, the assumption is often that in order to have a common language, there can be no others in use. This is a fallacy, for there can easily

exist a common language that speakers of any L1 acquire, while also still maintaining and using their L1.

McGroarty, 1997

L1 learners before age 5:

Lessow-hurley, 2005; Genesee, 1994

P. 169 Worldwide, monolinguals are in the minority:
Cummins, 2005

Major languages of Canada:
Statistics Canada

Infinite varieties of language:
Shohamy, 2006

P. 170 De facto policy:
Tollefson, 2002; Shohamy, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000

P. 176 French Immersion:
Burnaby, 1998; Ovando & Pérez, 2000; Dubach et al., 2003

P. 177 Subtractive bilingualism & additive bilingualism:
Cummins & Swain, 1986; Lessow-Hurley, 2005

P. 178 Literacy taught in both langs:
Tse, 2001; Freire, 2005

P. 185 Bilingual children outperform monolingual children:
Tse, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Wakabayashi, 2002

Intellectual advantages for bilinguals:
Cummins & Schecter, 2003

More ways to think (ie. divergent thinkers):
Cummins & Swain, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000

New concurrent approach:
Lessow-Hurley, 2005, p.81

P. 186 Cannot separate learning a language from learning in other areas:
Genesee, 1994

Code-switching:
Tse, 2001; Shohamy, 2006; Hoffman; 1990

Describing cultural phenomena:
Hoffman, 1990, p.107

- P. 188** **Vocabulary in one language, syntax and grammar in the other:**
Edwards, 1998
- P. 193** **Korean boys story:**
Based on Schechter et al., 2003 p.52; Corson, 1997, p.150
- P. 198** **Varieties of English:**
Bamgbose, 2001
- P. 219** **Sustaining gains throughout highschool :**
Thomas & Collier, 1997
- P. 233** **Resource book:**
Based on Thornhill Elementary model: Edwards, 1998, p.26
- P. 235** **Adult English classes:**
Cumming (1997) writes, "...the federal government allocates funds to selected colleges, school boards, and private agencies for several months of full-time language instruction and orientation"(p.93). For example, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and Labour Market Language Training (LMLT)
- P. 239** **Spanglish Lenika:**
Based on the idea of a "third space":
Sarkar (2005) says that "many young people in this generation identify themselves both as french-speaking Quebecois, and as members of immigrant communities with allegiances to other languages and cultures" (p.3).
Pennycook, 2001
Hoffman (1990) describes herself as a sum of her languages (pp. 273-274).

References

Abley, M. (2003). *Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages*. Toronto: Random House Canada. pp.162-189.

Backgrounder, The Residential School System (n.d.) Retrieved November 20, 2005, from http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs/schl_e.html

Bamgbose, A. (2001). World Englishes and Globalization. *World Englishes*, 20 (3), 357-363.

Bourne, J. (1997). The Grown-ups Know Best: Language Policy-Making in Britain in the 1990s. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.49-65). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Breaking the Silence (n.d.). Retrieved November 20, 2005, from <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/saskindian/a94sep04.htm>

Brutt-Griffler, J., & Makoni, S. (2005). The Use of Heritage Language: An African Perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89, 609-612.

Bryson, B. (2001). *The Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way*. New York, NY: Perennial.

I enjoyed this book and learned a lot about the history of the English language, as well as many characteristics and life-spans of other languages. It contributed to my overall knowledge of language families and how languages grow and blend and influence each other. It was fun to read and provided me with many little interesting facts, some of which worked their way into my characters' speech.

Burnaby, B. (1998). Reflections on Language Policies in Canada: Three Examples. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues* (pp.65-86). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Chomsky, N. (2004). *Language and Politics* (C.P.Otero, Ed.). Oakland, CA: AK Press.

This is a collection of interviews with Chomsky over the past few decades. It covers a wide range of topics with language and politics as the common theme throughout. This book was very useful to me because Chomsky explains the relationship between language and politics with many international, historical examples. I referred often to this book when I needed help visualizing power issues in relation to language and policy.

Chow, P., & Cummins, J. (2003). Valuing Multilingual and Multicultural Approaches to Learning. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.32-61). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Commins, N., & Miramontes, O. (2006). Addressing Linguistic Diversity From the Outset. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57, 240-247.

Corson, D. (1995). Towards a Comprehensive Language Policy: The Language of the School as a Second Language, An Ontario Perspective. *Education Canada*, 35, 48-54.

Although this article is quite old now, it was a great resource to me because it is a straightforward, simply organized comparison between Ontario's language policy and that of the State of Victoria, Australia. Corson describes briefly why these two regions are similar and discusses issues that both countries grapple with in education, such as heritage language maintenance, second language education, and aboriginal language policy, and the special needs of deaf signing students. The entire second half of the article is Corson's policy recommendations for each of these specific areas, including not just teaching method recommendations but also suggestions for parent involvement and activism in the school's language policy.

Corson, D. (1997). Social Justice in the Work of ESL Teachers. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.149-164). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Corson, D., & Lemay, S. (1996). *Social Justice and Language Policy in Education: The Canadian Research*. Toronto, Ont: OISE Press.

Coulombe, P. (1995). *Language Rights in French Canada*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Crawford, J. (2000a). *At War with Diversity: US Language Policy in an Age of Anxiety*. Toronto, Ont: Multilingual Matters.

Crawford, J. (2000b). Language Politics in the United States: The Paradox of Bilingual Education. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.106-125). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Cumming, A. (1997). English Language-in-Education Policies in Canada. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.91-105). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Cummins, J. (1991). *Empowering Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Learning Problems*. (ERIC Digest No. E500). Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. Retrieved March 15, 2006, from ERIC database.

This was one of my most useful articles because Cummins lays out the key ingredients to a healthy language policy in a school. I was able to imagine his recommendations in practice, and the supporting evidence he provides is very convincing. Teacher training, as well as multicultural education are discussed in length. I always appreciate the Canadian focus of much of Cummins' work.

Cummins, J. (1994). Knowledge, Power, and Identity in Teaching English as a Second Language. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp.33-58). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (1999). *BICS and CALP: Clarifying the Distinction*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Toronto. Retrieved October 23, 2006, from ERIC Database.

This article is the most straightforward explanation of BICS and CALP. I constantly referred to it as I read others' research in language acquisition, and it forms the base of much of my discussion around ESL pull-out classes, and testing of ESL students, as well as my understanding of language acquisition.

Cummins, J. (2000). Beyond Adversarial Discourse: Searching for Common Ground in the Education of Bilingual Students. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.126-147). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Cummins, J. (2001). Heritage Language Teaching in Canadian Schools. In C. Baker & N. Hornberger (Eds.), *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins* (pp.252-257). Toronto, Ont: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource Within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89, 585-592.

Cummins, J., & Schecter, S. (2003). Introduction: School-Based Language Policy in Culturally Diverse Contexts. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.1-16). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cummins, J., & Swain, M. (1986). *Bilingualism in Education*. New York, NY: Longman Group Limited.

This was another staple resource for understanding concepts fundamental to bilingual education such as the CUP and SUP, programme models (ie. what has been tried, what worked, what didn't work), and Canadian examples. There has been much written on these topics since this book's publication, but this served as one of my grounding works.

Diamond, J. (1999). *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Dixon, L. (2003). The Bilingual Education Policy in Singapore: Implications for Second Language Acquisition. In J.Cohen, K.McAlister, K. Rolstad, & J. MacSwan (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism* (pp. 625-635). Somervill, MA: Cascadilla Press. Retrieved October 23, 2006, from ERIC Database.

Dubach, G., Heller, M., & Roy, S. (2003). Community and Commodity in French Ontario. *Language in Society*, 32, 603-627.

Eberts, J., Young, L., Gendron, L.(Producers), & Richard Friedenberg (Director). (1997). *The Education of Little Tree* [Motion Picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Edwards, V. (1998). *The Power of Babel*. Reading, England: Trentham Books Limited.

This is a book that is designed to give the reader a comprehensible look at ways to make a school and classroom linguistically accessible to a diverse student population. It was directly in line with my thesis arguments, and as it reads more like a textbook, with lots of visuals, hands on materials, examples from actual classrooms, and teacher and student input, it was a refreshing look at language policy in action, and inspired me when I was designing Tove Elementary School.

Eggington, W. (1997a). The English Language Metaphors We Live By. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.) *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.29-46). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Eggington, W. (1997b). The Roles and Responsibilities of ESL Teachers Within National Language Policies. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.165-168). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fighting words: Bill 101 (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2005 from http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-73-1297/politics_economy/bill101/

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Although the context in which this book was written is perhaps not immediately identifiable as applicable to North America today (Freire is speaking about teaching literacy to Brazilian peasants so that they can have the skills necessary to overcome their oppressors in the 1960s), I would argue it is still extremely relevant in that oppression can be interpreted in more than one way. This book was useful to me in my discussion of hegemony, for much of what Freire writes applies to citizens aware of the hegemonic forces in their lives and wishing to resist them. Important terms he describes (and coined, in many cases) include praxis, conscientization, dialogue, the banking concept of education, and generative themes. His bottom line is that literacy and education are tools for emancipation.

Gandara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). *Listening to Teachers of English Language Learners*. Santa Cruz, CA: The Centre for the Future of Teaching and Learning. Retrieved October 24, 2006, from ERIC Database.

Genesee, F. (1994). Introduction. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp.1-12). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

This entire book was a great resource for a more psychological angle on language and linguistics. The introduction was especially useful, as Genesee walks you through the process for an immigrant child acquiring a new language. He expresses his strong opinion about community involvement in the curriculum, and using the knowledge children bring with them as resources in the classroom. The contributors in this book set the stage for the design of Tove Elementary.

Genesee, F., & Gandara, P. (1999). Bilingual Education Programs: A Cross-National Perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 65, 665-683.

Ghosh, R., & Abdi, A. (2004). *The Politics of Difference: A Canadian Perspective*. Toronto, Ont.: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Gonzalez, N., & Arnot-Hopffer, E. (2003). Voices of the Children: Language and Literacy Ideologies in a Dual Language Immersion Program. In S. Wortham & B. Rymes (Eds.) *Linguistic Anthropology of Education* (pp.213-244). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Heller, M. (1999). *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity*. New York, NY: Addison, Wesley Longman Limited.

Hoffman, E. (1990). *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Eva Hoffman's experience as an immigrant to North America served as a model for my characters' experiences. It is a passionate book and an easy one to read, yet full of examples of theories proven elsewhere in language acquisition and the role education plays in a child's self-concept. I used this book for much of my emotional content, and characters' thoughts about the world, especially Lenika's experience at Honey Elementary.

Hudelson, S. (1994). Literacy Development of Second Language Children. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp.129-158). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Jedwab, J. (2000). *Ethnic Identification and Heritage Languages in Canada*. Montreal, QC: Les Éditions Images.

Karmani, S. (2005). Petro-linguistics: The emerging nexus between oil, English, and Islam. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 4(2), 87-102.

Keeshig-Tobias, L. (2003). Trickster Beyond 1992: Our Relationship. In *Contemporary Native Perspectives*. Retrieved November 20, 2005 from <http://www.civilization.ca/aborig/fp/fpz2f30e.html>

Kincheloe, J. (2005a). *Critical Constructivism*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

This book was very useful because of its layout and readily accessible definitions. The content was inspirational when discussing the role of a teacher as a researcher, and the way a classroom and school environment should be designed to consider the background experiences of every child. Much of my teacher training programme was modeled from this book, as well as the content teacher's must learn in the L2 year.

Kincheloe, J. (2005b). *Critical Pedagogy*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Laine, S., & Sutton, M. (2000). The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Three-Country Comparison. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.82-103). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Lessow-Hurley, J. (2005). *The Foundations of Dual Language Instruction*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Inc.

This was an invaluable tool for me because it is a basic reader covering a wide range of topics in two-way immersion. Different models of dual language instruction and bilingual education are described, and vocabulary is laid out in textbook style, which made it easy to follow and to refer back to repeatedly. The LIP was built with much of the information from this book in mind. It was kind of like my encyclopaedia, when I needed further explanation of a concept or programme idea. Also full of excellent further reading suggestions.

Macedo, D., Dendrinos, B., & Gounari, P. (2003). *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Malcolm X (1965). Retrieved April 5, 2006, from <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/3191.html>

May, S. (2001). English hegemony and its critics. In S. May (Ed.), *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (pp.198-205). Harlow, England: Pearson Education/Longman.

McGroarty, M. (1997). Language Policy in the USA: National Values, Local Loyalties, Pragmatic Pressures. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.67-89). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

McGroarty, M. (2002). Evolving Influences on Educational Language Policies. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues* (pp.17-36). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

McKeon, D. (1994). Language, Culture, and Schooling. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp.15-32). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

de Mejía, A. (2002). *Power, Prestige and Bilingualism: International Perspectives on Elite Bilingual Education*. North York, Ont: Multilingual Matters.

Met, M. (1994). Teaching Content Through a Second Language. In F. Genesee (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp.159-182). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Niño-Murcia, M. (2003). English is Like the Dollar: Hard Currency Ideology and the Status of English in Peru. *World Englishes*, 22 (2), 121-141.

No Child Left Behind Act (2007). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved April 29, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind_Act

Ogbu, J. (2001). Understanding Cultural Diversity and Learning. In Banks & Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (pp.582-593). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

O'Grady, C., & Chappell, B. (2000). With, Not For: The Politics of Service Learning in Multicultural Communities. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.208-224). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Orwell, G. (1973). *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Ovando, C., & McLaren, P. (2000). Multiculturalism: Beyond a Zero-Sum Game. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.225-228). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Ovando, C., & Pérez, R. (2000). The Politics of Bilingual Immersion Programs. In C. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The Politics of Multicultural and Bilingual Education: Students and Teachers Caught in the Cross Fire* (pp.148-165). Toronto, ON: The McGraw Hill Companies.

Paciotto, C. (2004). Language Policy, Indigenous Languages and the Village School: A Study of Bilingual Education for the Tarahumara of Northern Mexico. *Bilingual Education in Bilingualism*, 7, 529-548.

Pattanayak, D. (2000). Linguistic Pluralism: A Point of Departure. In R. Phillipson (Ed.), *Rights to Language: Equity, Power, and Education* (pp.46-58). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical Applied Linguistics: a Critical Introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This is a passionate and compelling book about the politics involved in language planning and policy, rights, linguistics, and education. It is a thorough introduction that is organized into sections focusing on the political and critical aspects of language issues. It was useful to me as a source of information regarding the reasons for educating via the child's L1, as well as the ways in which language can be used to serve dominant group interests, particularly concerning the global spread of English.

Pennycook, A. (2002). Language Policy and Docile Bodies: Hong Kong and Governmentality. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues* (pp.91-110). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Peritz, I. (2006, February 11) Spreading the (English) Word *Globe and Mail*, p.A1

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Pufahl, I., Rhodes, N., & Christian, D. (2001). *What We Can Learn from Foreign Language Teaching in Other Countries*. (ERIC Digest). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. Retrieved March 15, 2006, from ERIC database.

Ramirez, J. (2002). Bilingual Education: Talking Points. In E. Lee (Ed.), *Beyond Heroes and Holidays, A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development* (pp.178-185). Washington, DC: Teaching for Change.

This is one of favourite articles from an author who has done extensive research in the field of language policy and L1 medium instruction. Although his focus is on the United States, Ramirez writes in a way that can be useful to anyone researching why English-only policies are harmful to many children. This article briefly defines bilingual education and English-only education, and then enumerates arguments for and against English-only instruction. The against sections are much longer than the for sections because Ramirez is mainly refuting myths about education that have been thriving in America for decades, such as "The language of this land has always been English", "Bilingual education is too expensive and doesn't work", and "English-only initiatives unite communities".

Rassool, N. (2004). Sustaining Linguistic Diversity within the Global Cultural Economy: Issues of Language Rights and Linguistic Possibilities. *Comparative Education*, 40, 199-214.

Ruhlen, M. (1994). *The Origin of Language: Tracing the Evolution of the Mother Tongue*. Toronto, ON: John Wiley & Sons.

Sale, L., Sliz, L., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2003). Creating an Inclusive Climate for Newly Arrived Students. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.17-31). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sarkar, M. (2005). Language of Education Policy in Quebec: Access to Which Majority Language and for Whom? In S. May, M. Franken & R. Bernard (Eds.), *Refereed Conference Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity* (pp. 1-9). Hamilton: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, University of Waikato.

Schecter, S., Solomon, P., & Kittmer, L. (2003). Integrating Teacher Education in a Community-Situated School Agenda. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.81-96). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

School Profiles (n.d.). Retrieved April 14, 2007, from http://www.tdsb.on.ca/profiles/new_profiles/1184.pdf

Shaw, P. (2003). Leadership in the Diverse School. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.97-112). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language Policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. New York, NY: Routledge.

One of my most useful resources, Shohamy writes very passionately about the intricacies and complexities of languages. Her examples are from everywhere, but are always personal and really give the reader a good sense of the negative effects of language discrimination and harmful policies in education. The book reads almost like a novel, and is powerful because of her emotional way of expressing the hold a negative language policy can have on a child's life. A common theme is the tight connection between one's identity and language. She also discusses testing.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic Genocide in Education – Or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas is one of today's most prominent linguistic human rights activists. In this enormous book, she discusses how a language policy in education that allows all students to achieve high levels of bilingualism is necessary for democracy to exist in its true form, in which each individual has the opportunity to develop a positive sense of self in order to make a positive contribution to society. It is organized into many chapters, sections, subsections, tables, graphs, anecdotes, references, statistics, studies, definitions, and everything else you could want to know about linguistic rights. This book was most useful because she clarifies notions and terms that may float around in other works without being clearly defined, as well as histories of policies that have been tried in L2 education, and documents that have been passed on language rights (such as the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights). She gives lots of examples to illustrate her points, and the glossary at the back is detailed so that you can use this book as a reference for almost anything language related.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Phillipson, R. (1995). Linguistic Human Rights, Past and Present. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & R. Phillipson (Eds.), *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination* (pp.71-110). New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.

Solomon, B., & Ippolito, J. (2003). New Country, New Language: Writings by Multilingual Students. In S. Schecter & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (pp.62-80). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Statistics Canada (2006). *Census*. Ottawa, Ontario. Retrieved April 14, 2007, from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>

Statistics Canada (2007). *Immigrant population by place of birth, by province and territory (2001 Census)* (table). Ottawa, Ontario. Retrieved April 7, 2007, from <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo34a.htm>

Terralingua (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2006, from <http://www.terralingua.org/> p. 71.

Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (1997). School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students [Electronic version]. *NCBE Resource Collection Series*, 9, 1-96. Retrieved January 7, 2007, from www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/resource/effectiveness/thomas-collier97.pdf

Tollefson, J. (2002). Introduction: Critical Issues in Educational Language Policy. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues* (pp.3-16). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This book is a useful tool for examples of the various ways language policy has affected nations and peoples around the world, including a good chapter by **Barbara Burnaby (see reference)** who writes

on three different language policies in Canada. **Pennycook**'s chapter is also especially interesting, as it gives an account of the way the British used language policy in Hong Kong to maximize the working potential for their own benefit (ie. the use of language to keep the natives repressed). **Wiley** discusses the shortcomings of the American system. The book, including all the sections by Tollefson himself, is a great resource for understanding the power language can have as a weapon for control.

Toronto Community Foundation (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2007, from <http://www.tcf.ca/index.html>

Tse, L. (2001). *"Why Don't They Learn English?" Separating Fact from Fallacy in the U.S. Language Debate.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Chapter three through six of this book were extremely helpful to me. Tse explains the life of an immigrant language - what they need to survive, and what are the benefits of developing heritage languages. She discusses the consequences of language loss on a multicultural society like the United States (and Canada) and what can be done to promote the use of heritage languages in the school system and the public sphere. Her goal is to clarify some of the myths that circulate about bilingual education, such as learning through the L2 rather than L1.

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996). Retrieved November 18, 2005 from <http://www.linguistic-declaration.org/decl-gb.htm>

Wakabayashi, T. (2002). *Bilingualism as a Future Investment: The Case of Japanese High School Students at an International School in Japan.* *Bilingual Research Journal*, 26 (3), 631-658.

Although this study is specifically dealing with Japanese students learning English in Japan, I referred to it often because many of the results were typical of what other authors claimed happened under certain language policies. It was one of my links to an actual circumstance, and the authors mention much of the research in the field, including Canadian French immersion programmes. This allowed me to think beyond a North American context, and confirmed that so much of L2-medium information is indeed true across languages.

Weinreich, U. (1945). Retrieved April 20, 2006, from <http://www.edu-cyberpg.com/Linguistics/armynavy.html>

Wiley, G. (2002). Accessing Language Rights in Education: A Brief History of the U.S. Context. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues* (pp.39-64). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wiley, G., & Wright, E. (2004). Against the Undertow: Language-Minority Education Policy and Politics in the "Age of Accountability". *Educational Policy*, 18, 142-168.

Wilmot, E. (2002, March). *Improving Achievement or Constructing Marginality? Pupil Performance and Classroom Language Use in Ghana.* Paper Presented at the Comparative and International Education Society, Orlando, FL.

Wren, H. (1997). Making a Difference in Language Policy Agendas. In W. Eggington & H. Wren (Eds.), *Language Policy: Dominant English, Pluralist Challenges* (pp.3-27). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.