Growing Up Around the World

A BOOK ABOUT THIRD CULTURE KIDS

BRIANNA MUNANTO

Introduction

Many would say that the question "Where are you from?" is a very easy question to answer. For most people, it's a one or two answer question. However, there is a group of people, myself included, who don't specifically identify to one country or culture as they have grown up in numerous parts of the world. We're called Third Culture Kids.

Growing up globally can be very confusing and challenging. We can't make sense of where home is and what it actually means to us. At times, it can feel like we belong both nowhere and everywhere. There's also the difficulty of having to adjust to a completely new culture and a new way of living. It's not easy to feel at home in one culture then be forced or peer pressured to feel the same way about a completely different or new one.

Living nomadically may sound like a luxury and privilage to some people, and even though it does prove to be exactly that, there are many consequences that must be faced. This book was made to help raise awareness and educate about the idea of globally raised children and the effects of living nomadically as a child.

- Brianna Munanto

It's not easy to be shifting from different cultures consecutively yet there are millions of children who have to face this challenge everyday.

Some of them have to face the same problems over and over again or they might even find themselves stuck in a new problem with a whole new way of solving it.

There may be many obstacles that a globally raised kid has to face, but it isn't difficult when your friends and family are there to support you.

Author's Note

The title "Third Culture Kid" (TCK) represents the three main cultures that a nomadic child has to grow up with. The first culture represents the child's passport culture. The second culture represents the host culture or the culture that the child primarily grew up with. The third culture is a unique mixture of the two (or more) cultures that the child has experienced. Ruth Hill Useem, a professor in Sociology at Michigan State University first coined the title "Third Culture Kid" in 1955. This title was initially for children who were raised in a different culture than their passport culture due to their parent's occupation, most of them being children of missionaries, army brats, and children of diplomats.

This book discusses TCKs and children who have grown up in similar ways of a TCK or what is most commonly known as Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). Cross-Culture Kids are people who have been exposed to at least two or more culutres for a long period of time during their years of development. This includes traditional TCKs, bi/multi-cultural or bi/multi-racial kids, and children of immigrants, refugees, minorities, and international adoptees (Van Reken).

Children growing up nomadically is something that has been more and more common in the recent years; nevertheless, it has not made it less challenging to do so. The most important thing a TCK must be able to do is be able to communicate with their parents about the situation they are in; the lifestyle they lead. It does not come easy at first, as parents will have come from a different generation from their children and therefore will have a different understanding of the world and TCKs. But with time and effort, parents will always do their best to understand their children.

As for parents, they should always take note on the behaviour of their children and the way they adjust to these varied cultures. It is not easy to continuously be changing and adapting to a numerous amount of customs and traditions at such a young age and parents should be able to understand and resonate with that. One of the most effective and simplest ways of doing that is by making time to both listen and communicate with the child followed by providing options to make them feel more secure. The teachers, friends, and extended families of the TCK should also help create a safer atmosphere by, again, listening and communicating.

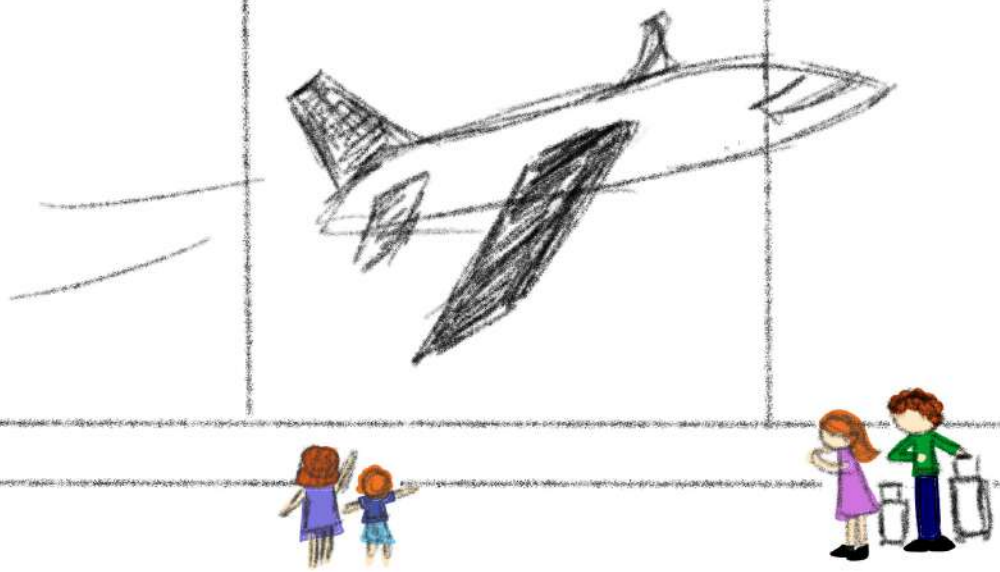
The characters in this book are not based on real people. They are based on real life experiences from both myself and people who I know personally. They are also based on the experiences of real people who have shared their TCK experiences online, in books, or in any other form of media.

Emma was born in Lusaka, Zambia.
Though and her family are originally from Perth, Australia. Her parents had to move to Lusaka for work.

Emma loves living in Zambia.
She has many school friends and loves the culture there.

She's very familiar with Zambian cuisine and despite having an “English only rule” at home, she speaks two of the national languages when she’s with her friends: Bemba & Nyanja.

When Emma was 12 years old, her parents had to move back to Australia.



Once she returned to school, she noticed a vast difference between her school back in Zambia and her current school in Australia.

The learning environment was so different to what she had known which made her really struggle with it.
Not only did she have trouble with learning at school, but she was also finding it hard to make friends.

Emma, who was normally outgoing and loud, became shy and quiet.

One of Emma's teachers, Ms Kelly, began to notice how quiet Emma had become. Ms Kelly tried to talk to Emma and asked if she was okay and if there was anything that she could do. Emma told her the trouble she had been having at school: the new system, making friends –everything.

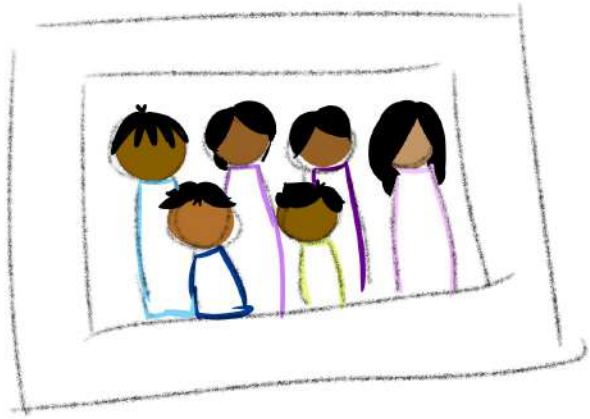
After hearing about the troubles that Emma had been having, she realised how difficult it must be to have to shift to completely new way of living. And for someone Emma's age, it must have been twice as hard.

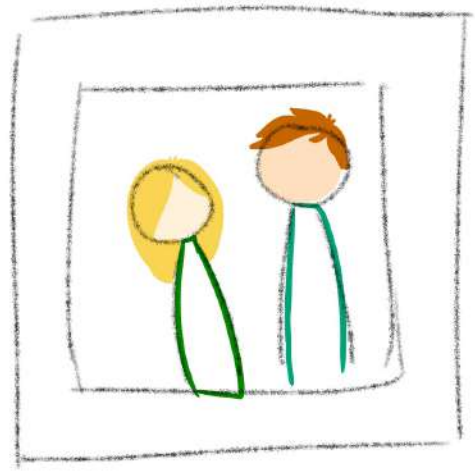
Even though Emma still missed Zambia and her friends back in Lusaka, she was thankful that Ms Kelly helped her adjust to the new school system and encouraged her to make friends. Because of this, she began to look forward to school.

Rahul is biracial. His mother is from India and his father is German.

Before Rahul was born, his parents moved to Canada to start a new life there as immigrants.

During the school holidays, Rahul would take turns visiting his families from Munich and Mumbai.



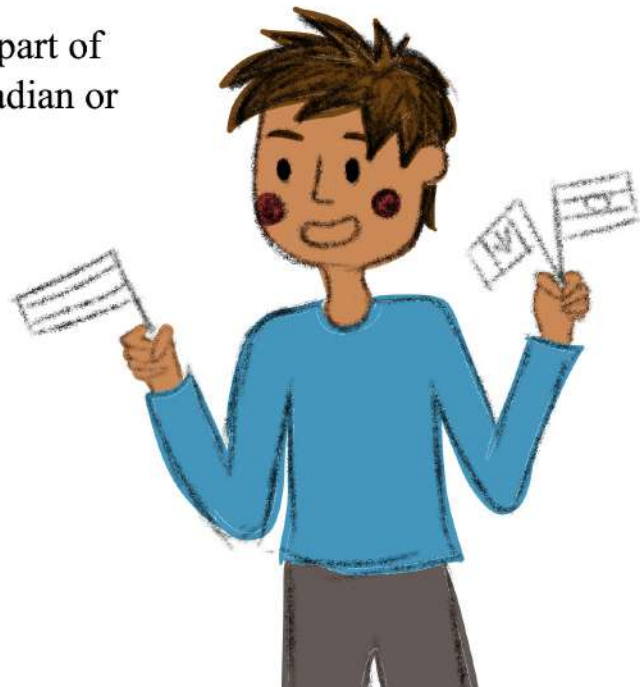


Rahul took a look at his family. He noticed that every person in his family was different in their own ways. Different shades of skin tones, different names, and different appearances. Nothing about them was alike.

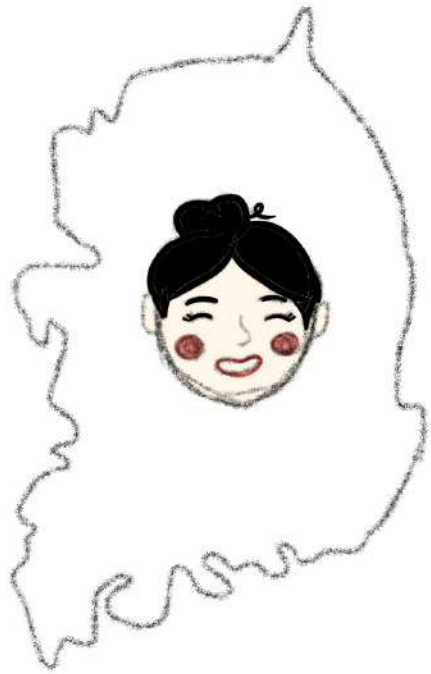
Rahul soon realised that he was apart of all three of these cultures.

At first, Rahul thought that he could only be apart of one culture. He thought he could only be Canadian or only German or only Indian.
But it came true to him that his uniqueness came from his diversity in culture. He learned that this mixture of different cultures and traditions was what made him, him.

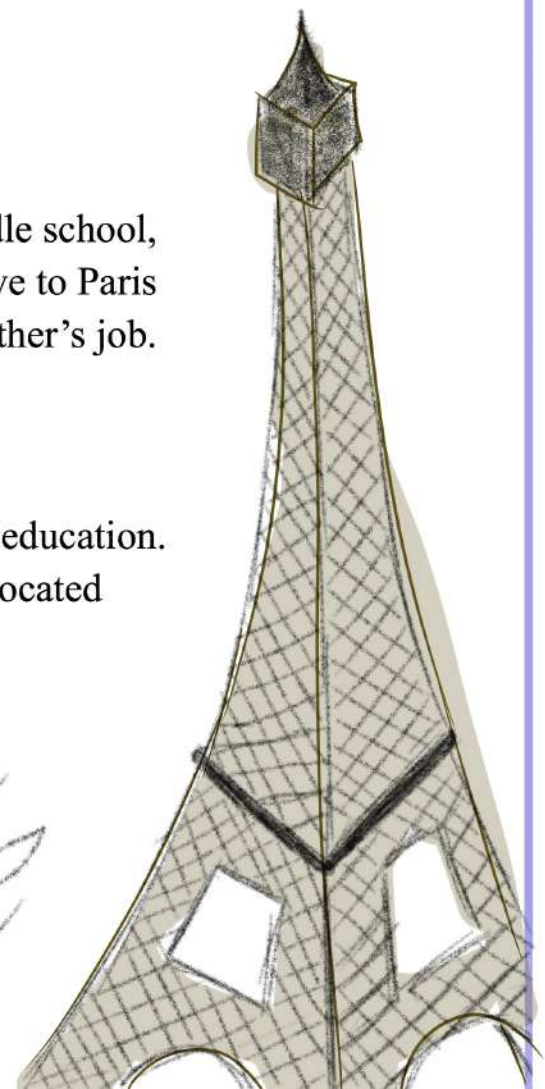
And he was certainly proud of it.



Jin-Young is from South Korea.
She was born and raised in the busy city of Seoul.



After Jin-Young graduated middle school,
she and her parents had to move to Paris
because her father's job.



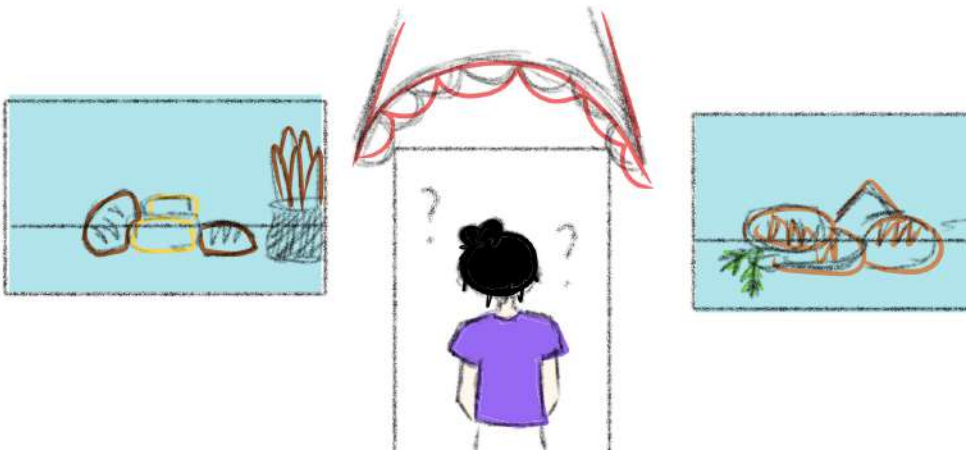
This was also an opportunity for her to peruse a better education.
She went to an international, English-medium school located
in the city.

Back when she was still living in Seoul, she had learned a bit of English at school making it easier to transistion into her new school.

English was only used at school. At home, she would speak Korean with her parents. However, whenever she had to go out by herself, like when she would use the Métro to get to school or when she would go to a café and order some food, she would have to speak the country's native language: French.

This was something she found quite difficult.

Jin-Young really struggled with the French language. Everything about it was so unfamiliar and foreign to her.

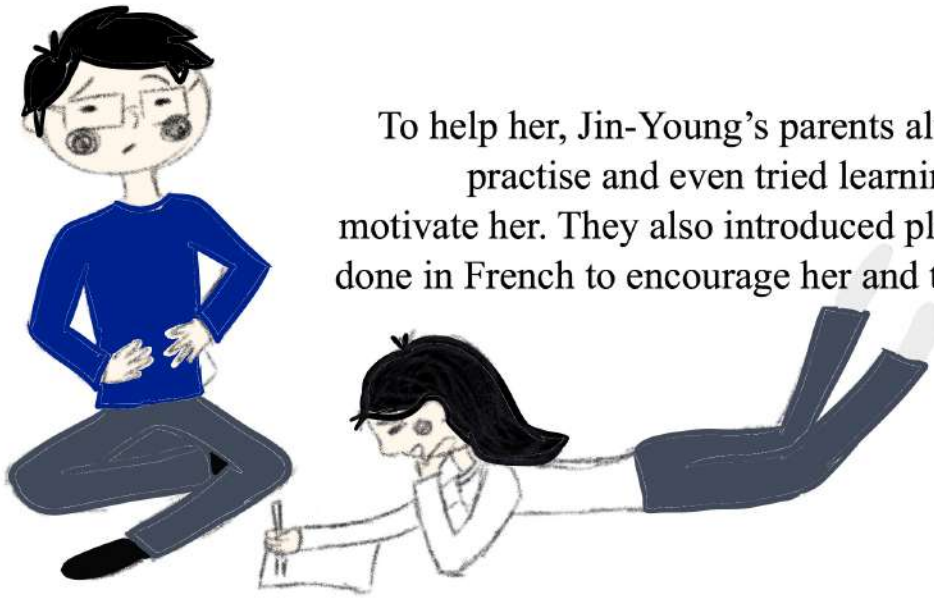


Almost everyone in France spoke French and getting by without the ability to speak it was not easy. Jin-Young became quieter and lost the motivation to go out or have any social interaction.

Her parents noticed how alone and quiet Jin-Young had become and asked her if they could help her. Jin-Young told her parents about how she really struggled with the French language. She told them it was like nothing she had even seen, read, or heard.

Neither if Jin-Young's parents were fluent in French so they understood the situation she was in and how much of a burden it must be, especially because she was the one growing up with French culture.

To help her, Jin-Young's parents always made time for her to practise and even tried learning French with her to help motivate her. They also introduced playful activities and games done in French to encourage her and to make language learning less stressful for her.



Because of her parents' support, over time, Jin-Young became more comfortable with the French language. Her new knowledge of French made her respect both the language and the culture.

Through her learning French, she also learned the importance of languages and how difficult it is to learn a language. Despite the hardship she had to endure whilst learning a new language, she was grateful that she had the opportunity to.

Jin-Young became more interested in learning languages and continued to learn more!

Gabriel was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He lived in Rio up until the age of three before he and his sister had to move to America because of his mother's job. After living there a while, Gabriel became a Brazilian-American holding both American and Brazillian citizenships.

Growing up in the States, Gabriel and his family would all speak to each other in Portuguese. When he was with his friends at school, he would talk to them in English.

Gabriel loved living in America.
He felt at home there. He felt American.

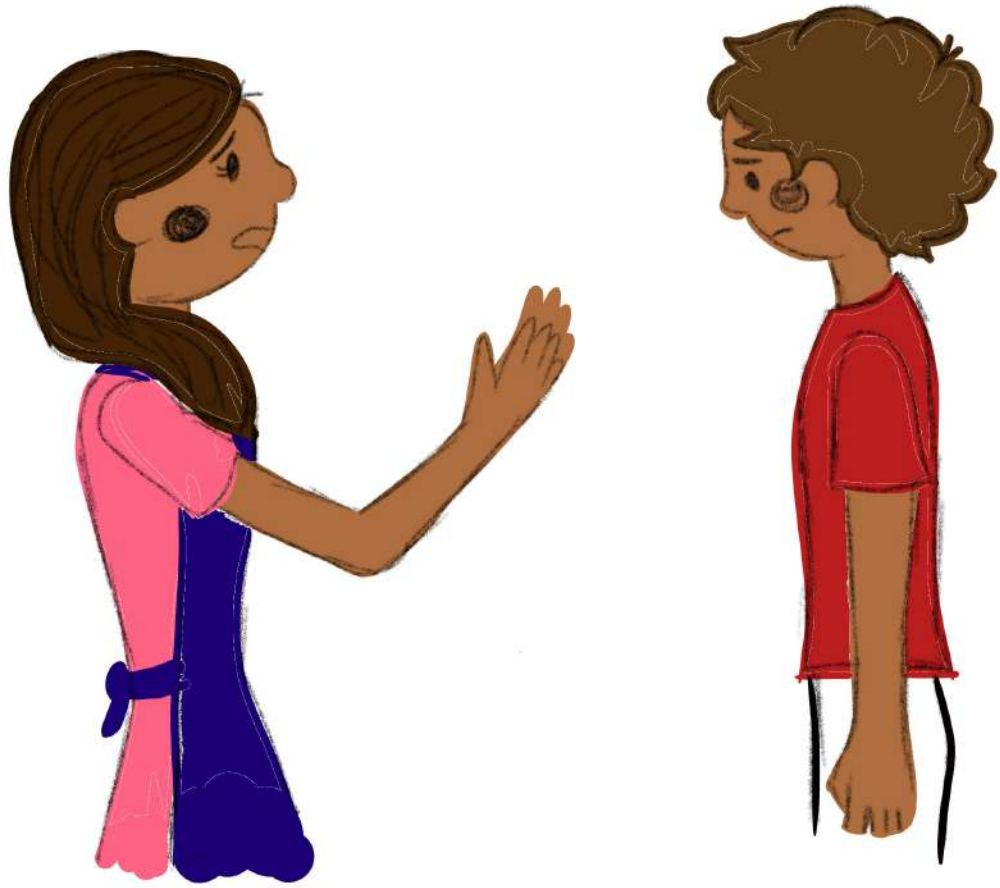
The only thing that opposed this thought was the fact that he didn't think he look like an American, or at least like any of his American friends.

He didn't have blond or red hair like his friends Jackson and Ben.

Or blue eyes and fair skin like Anna.

Every time he looked at himself in the mirror, he would get upset and disappointed. He hated his black hair, dark eyes, and tan skin.

Gabriel just wished he looked like his fairer-skinned friends. He knew that if he did, he wouldn't feel like the odd one out when he was with his friends.



Gabriel's mother would tell him that having these Brazilian features made him unique and that his friends would probably want to look like him instead. Despite his mother's words, he still felt insecure about the way he looked. He thought that looking a specific way would make him feel like he truly belonged in America. And that was all he wanted

Little did he know, that his friends actually loved his unique features!

Jackson had always wanted to have dark hair and told Gabriel that he was lucky to be born with it.

His friend, Anna, told him that she wanted to have naturally tan skin like Gabriel.

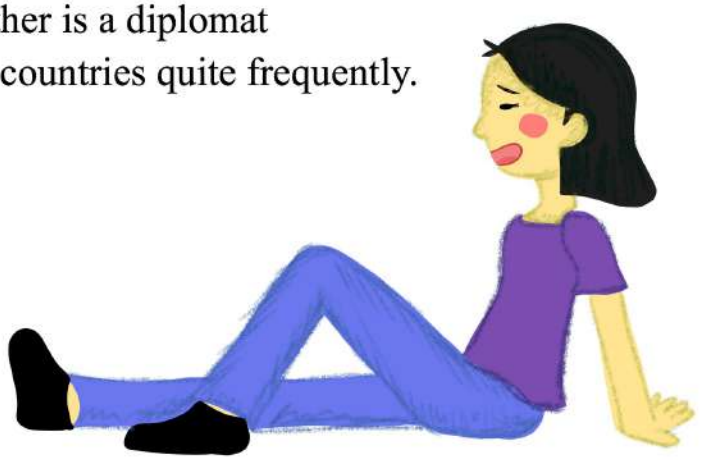
Even Ben was jealous of Gabriel's dark eyes!

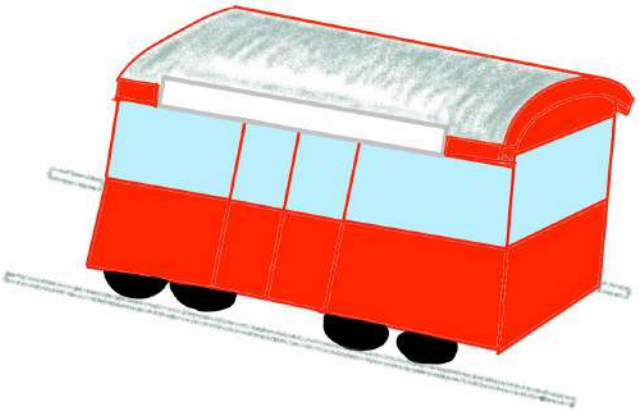
Gabriel was really shocked to hear this. He was so focused on his own insecurities that he didn't even realise that the people he wanted to look like wanted to have his features.

His friends gave him confidence. With this confidence, he learned to embrace his Brazillan features

Gabriel used to hate the way he looked because he didn't look like his friends. But it was his friends who made him realise that his features were what made him unique. He learned that he didn't need to have certain features to feel like he was American and learned to love the features he was born with.

Nia was born in Wellington, New Zealand but
she's actually from Indonesia. Her mother is a diplomat
so she has to move around to different countries quite frequently.





So far, she's lived in New Zealand,

Indonesia,