

## I Grew up in Another Language

by Richard Rewell

I grew up in another language. But let me tell you about myself.

My very first memory was of my parents looking at me. They were smiling, laughing and hugging each other. I vaguely remember my father leading me to a huge window through which I saw a vast pine forest stretching forever over rolling hills, sprinkled here and there with beautiful houses. I recall walking onto a balcony and feeling the sun's warmth and marvelling at the azure sky above and a distant city next to a glistening sea. I can also recall a shiny sparkling floor in a large room, in the middle of which stood my bed. I can just about remember my first words. Well bits of words. My parents appeared so happy with me. And I was happy. I loved the place where I used to live. But it all changed.

Even now I reflect upon the orange flames scything through the pine forest, killing it, leaving only black twisted, smouldering skeletal forms that had once been majestic trees. I remember the fear I felt and then seeing it on my parents faces when the uniformed men came. Then there was only blackness. Until.

Until I was conscious of my parents leading me across a giant room, it was strange with large lights in the ceiling, a roundabout with bags on it, uniformed men, big desks, massive pictures of weird lands, lots of shops then hundreds of people staring at us. Some spoke but I did not understand them. Some pointed. Some laughed. Not a warm loving laugh. It was false. I sensed fear. They were afraid of my parents and me.

Later I sat between my parents in a very large motor car which took us from what I learnt was an airport. We travelled through a city and then into areas where there

were less buildings. This was nice. Lots of trees and hills. I saw fields with curious creatures. Woolly things. I liked them.

The driver of the motor car spoke to my parents who seemed to know his language then we passed through some gates and pulled up outside a big yellow stone house with steps leading up to an elegant front door. We left the car, ascended the steps and reached the elegant door that opened, and we were greeted by smiling people who lead us into a hall and then an expansive room where there were six small people like me. But not all were like me, some were different colours. Black. Brown.

The small people spoke to me, but I did not understand them. I felt stupid. And afraid. So I looked at my parents. But they were gone. Fear exploded inside of me and I panicked. But then a big person like my parents walked towards me, smiled and stroked my head.

I felt a warmth rising inside of me just as a small person strode up to me and smiled.

“Hello. What’s your name?”. Then I understood. Then I understood their language. Elated, I replied.

“Hello. My name is R.A.F, your robotic, amiable friend. Mark One.”