

I'M SANDRA

A Newcomer's Tale: Navigating systems and seeking self.

For every woman who left one home to build another, this is for you.

Looking for another job, working until 5 p.m., studying English at night, and keeping up with my university courses feels like torture.



...but I can do it!



I won't tell anyone I'm a Geomatics Engineer in my country until my credentials are recognized here in Canada.



The first interview...

Can you give me an example of how **reciprocity** shaped your work with others?



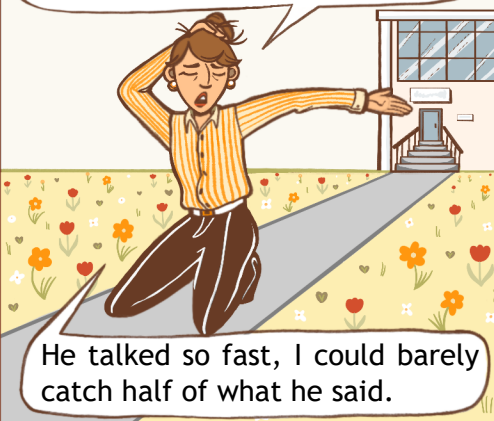
I've heard that word before, but I don't remember what it means... let me guess.



I must have gotten it wrong, and the conversation ended up going in a different direction.



If only he'd spoken a bit more slowly... I applied for an admin position, not to be a CBC host!



Rejection after rejection... I just wish someone would give me feedback on what I'm doing wrong so I can learn and improve.



I've emailed several companies that rejected me, asking for feedback, but I never get any response.



Five months later...

After running between interviews, navigating the job market, and learning as I go, I finally got a job! I'm an Event Assistant, and the salary is great compared to back home.



My colleague hugged me to express how happy he was to have me on the team. I froze. I was too shy to refuse and explain that, in our culture, we don't hug men.



The following week...

This training is hard to follow. The language, the quizzes, and some of the processes feel like a puzzle. It looks like there are two systems to navigate: internal and external. Maybe they are right when they say you need "Canadian experience".



Every minute of my day feels pre-planned. Twenty-four hours never feels like enough to...

...work on my courses...



...go to my part-time job...



...and study English

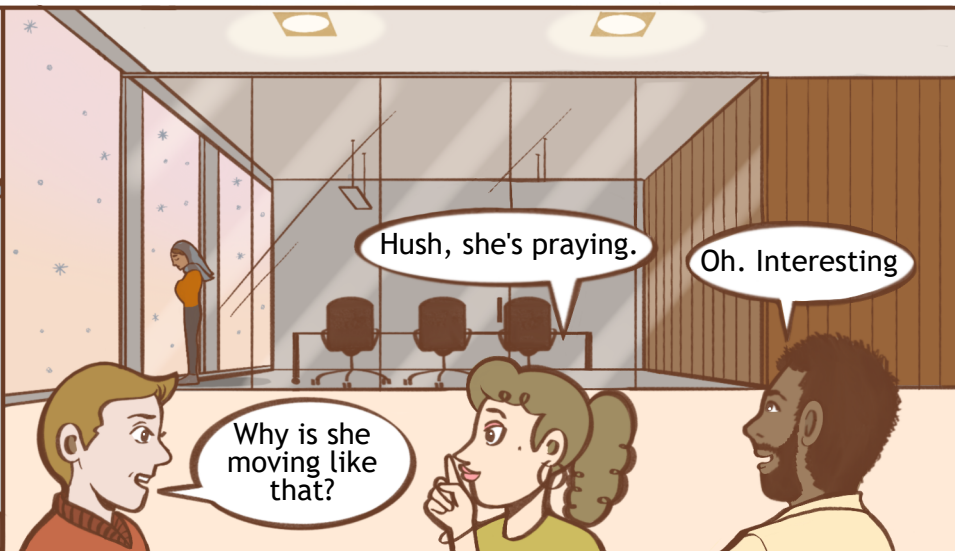


...but I think my body is getting used to it.



At work...

I know they didn't tell me to work this hard, but I feel the need to push myself to prove I was worth hiring.



Will this bus ever come?
I'm freezing...



so tired...



Oh no! It left without me. Well,
walking is warmer than standing here.



After six months...

I was chosen to lead the next big event! Deep down, I wish I was the one hosting, speaking on stage and interviewing the panelists.



A few weeks later...

I found out I make 3% less than others in my position at this company.



My colleagues said it might be because I haven't worked in Canada before.

I won't bring it up to HR. I worked so hard to get this job. I can't help but wonder; can't we learn Canadian culture over time, and at the same time make space for other cultures in the way we work?



I miss my child so much! One day you'll be here with me, my love.



You'll speak English much better than I do and find a great job. I can't wait to see you shine in Canada.

One month later...

My manager was happy with how I organized the event. He especially appreciated how I brought in different planning approaches and included food from a variety of cultures.



I think I'm finally ready to propose my 'Cultural Café' idea to our HR department. It could help introduce my colleagues to the traditions, celebrations, and other cultural practices of the newcomers in our office.



I want to create a safer space for all cultures, stories, and people in this office. I'll begin my first session by sharing how and why I'm grateful to be in Canada, my second home.



About IMvisible EMpowerment:

The IMvisible EMpowerment Project is a program by the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) dedicated to economically empowering immigrant women throughout their employment journeys. The project focuses on promoting inclusive hiring practices and strengthening culturally responsive HR capacity. It also raises awareness of systemic barriers and advocates for change to support immigrant women in achieving their economic goals.

To learn more, please scan the QR code:



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