



# Neila in the Neighborhood

By Cara Bafile

**NARRATOR 1:**

After a long day of travel, Neila was eager for a bite to eat. She was tired and hungry, and still very far from home.

**NARRATOR 2:**

But Neila was nervous too. Should she stop here or try to go on? Would the natives be friendly? Would they understand her language? Would *she* understand them? Neila wondered and worried. Finally, more hungry than afraid, she pulled up in front of a small store and followed some shoppers inside.

**STORE CLERK:**

Welcome to Family Food. May I help you find something?

**NEILA:**

Nurbit.

**STORE CLERK:**

Nutty Bits crackers? They're in aisle five, ma'am.

**NARRATOR 1:**

Neila stared at the shelves of brightly-colored boxes, bags, and bottles. There was so much to see! Just as she was about to choose a package, Neila was startled by an announcement on the intercom.

**STORE CLERK:**

All available clerks come to check out, please.

**NARRATOR 2:**

At that moment, a woman wearing a vest and a nametag brushed by, and Neila followed her to the front of the store. There a gigantic mouth caught her eye. How could she have missed it on her way in?

**STORE CLERK:**

Need more help, ma'am?

**NEILA:**

Hopti?

**STORE CLERK:**

Hot tea? Aisle seven.

**NARRATOR 1:**

Neila didn't search for tea. Instead, she watched as customers put their groceries into bags and carried the bags out of the store through the huge mouth. It was actually a sliding glass door, Neila saw.

**NARRATOR 2:**

Finally, Neila thought she understood. She joined the check-out line and, when it was her turn, took a bag right out of the hands of the employee who was packing groceries. She walked up to the door and held up the bag. The door opened and Neila walked through it.

**STORE CLERK:**

Silly kid. I guess she just wanted a bag.

**NARRATOR 1:**

Neila was glad she'd figured out how to get out of the store...but she was *still* hungry.

**NARRATOR:**

Then Neila saw children walking into a building called *Public Library* and decided join them. Inside, she saw people sitting at tables holding books. But no one was eating. The books look so yummy, Neila thought. Why isn't anyone eating them?

**LIBRARIAN:**

Are you looking for something?

**NEILA:**

Wachekeke.

**LIBRARIAN:**

*War and Peace*? An excellent choice! It's right here.

**NARRATOR 1:**

The librarian handed the book to Neila. Neila smiled. She had chosen well. *War and Peace* was one of the biggest books on the shelf. It was sure to be delicious and filling. But why wasn't anyone eating?

**NARRATOR 2:**

Then Neila saw a young girl at the counter. The girl handed a book to the librarian, who scanned it, and gave it back. Then the little girl left the library. Finally, Neila understood.

**LIBRARIAN:**

May I help you?

**NARRATOR:**

Neila remembered what she had heard at the store.

**NEILA:**

Kapack. "Check out."

**LIBRARIAN:**

Hello, Kapack. You must be new here. Do you have a library card? You need a library card, sweetie, to take out this book.

**NARRATOR 1:**

Neila was confused by what the librarian said. So, she left the book on the counter and walked out the door. She was *still* hungry.

**NARRATOR 2:**

Just then, a delicious smell drifted in Neila's direction -- and her nose told her to follow it. The aroma was coming from a school down the street. Suddenly, a whistle blew and a group of children lined up at the door. Neila joined the line, hoping to get closer to the sweet smell.

**PRINCIPAL:**

Pardon me, young lady. I don't recognize you. What's your name?

**NEILA:**

Zabidnu, sweetie.

**PRINCIPAL:**

Ah. Ah...ahem. You must be our new foreign exchange student. How do you like our school, Zabidnu?

**NEILA:**

Agjess. "They will."

**PRINCIPAL:**

I know. It can be hard to adjust, but I'm sure you'll do just fine. Enjoy your hot dog!

**NARRATOR 1:**

The students *were* going to lunch. Neila was so hungry she wanted to rush to the front of the line, but she decided it was wiser to wait and watch. As the line moved toward the food, Neila saw the children pick up forks and spoons, plates, and cartons of milk along the way.

**NARRATOR 2:**

Then Neila understood. So she too gathered several spoons and forks and got ready to trade them for some food.

**CAFETERIA WORKER:**

Honey, give me your tray and I'll give you some ice cream. You don't have to give me your silverware though. You'll need that.

**NARRATOR 1:**

Just as Neila headed toward a table where she could sit and eat her delectable lunch, the principal stopped her again.

**PRINCIPAL:**

Zabidnu, I'd like to introduce you to our nurse, Mrs. Wellchild.

**NEILA:**

Drzle. "Fire."

**PRINCIPAL:**

Fire? Where? Sound the alarm!

**NARRATOR 1:**

Students rushed to exits as the fire alarm beeped and teachers tried to keep order. The principal took Neila's tray and led her outside the building. Disappointed to lose her lunch again, Neila walked back to Family Foods and drove away in her SUV (space utility vehicle).

**NARRATOR 2:**

Soon, Neila passed a restaurant called Sammy's. She saw people drive up to a window and pick up bags of food. Sure she understood how to get food this time, Neila backed up to the window.

**SAMMY:**

You took a shortcut, huh? You must be from out of town.

**NEILA:**

Mukchak. "Hot dog."

**SAMMY:**

A hot dog and a milkshake? What do you want on your dog?

**NEILA:**

Squerklit. "Ice cream."

**SAMMY:**

Sauerkraut and ice cream? I've heard of *the works*, but that sounds terrible. Why don't you just try a plain dog?

**NARRATOR:**

To Sammy's amazement, Neila ate the hot dog in just one bite.

**NEILA:**

Clctoo.

**SAMMY:**

*Clctoo*? Is this one of those reality TV shows?

**NARRATOR 1:**

But Neila had driven away already. Down the street, Neila saw lots of people standing around their cars. "This must be an even better restaurant than Sammy's," Neila thought. She quickly found a spot next to a gas pump and waited patiently until the attendant came by.

**ATTENDANT:**

What can I do you for?

**NEILA:**

Lixburl. "The works."

**NARRATOR 2:**

The attendant walked completely around Neila's SUV three times.

**ATTENDANT:**

Is this one of those hybrid cars? I can't figure out how to fill 'er up.

**NARRATOR 1:**

The smell coming from this business wasn't nearly as sweet as the smell at Sammy's. Neila knew she didn't want to eat there, so she continued her search for food. She was thrilled when she saw another drive-thru window across the street. People drove up to the window, put things in the drawer, and got other things back. Neila understood and joined the line.

**BANK TELLER:**

How may I help you?

**NARRATOR 2:**

Neila realized that she had nothing to exchange for food. She searched her SUV, but found only the bag from Family Food. Maybe she could use its power again. Neila put the bag in the drawer.

**NEILA:**

Gumber. "Fill 'er up."

**NARRATOR 1:**

The terrified teller filled the sack with money and passed it to Neila, who took it happily and parked on the roof of the bank. She couldn't wait another minute to try this food! Neila quickly ate a stack of ones.

**NEILA:**

Blugh! Igs spu urgus blee "hot dog."

**NARRATOR 2:**

The food was not nearly as tasty as the hot dog. Disappointed, Neila dove back to the window. Surrounded by flashing lights, she put the bag of bills back into the drawer. "Some things are worth waiting for, and good food is one of them," she thought to herself as her SUV disappeared into the night sky.

