

6. "Who wants to go find it? Who's willing to find it and bring it to us?" asked the owl with a very serious face.
7. There was a long silence. everyone was quiet. No one said a thing. Who will be the brave one who brings us fire?
8. Suddenly, the vulture said, "Don't worry, friends. I can fly very high and very far and find the fire. That way we'll have light and heat." And so he said good-bye and left.
9. The vulture flew very high through the air. From up high, he saw kingdoms and cities, rivers and valleys, forests and deserts. But the fire wasn't anywhere.
10. Finally, the vulture found the fire on the top of a mountain, hidden behind a rock. It was a shining ball of fire. He picked it up in his beak and put it on his head.
11. The vulture flew back with the ball of fire. When he arrived, the vulture let it fall to the ground. But the vulture's head was burned, and that's why he has no feathers there.
12. On the ground, the ball of fire bounced here and there and left small bonfires behind it. "Now we need the Sun!" said the wise old owl.
13. Then, the beaver stretched out his tail and flipped it very powerfully, tossing the fire into the sky. And ever since that, we've had the Sun. But the beaver's tail got burned and that's why he has no hair there.
14. Thanks to the owl, the vulture and the beaver, today we have sun and fire. The sun and fire give us light and heat. Thank you, thank you truly for wanting to help us. And that's how this ancient story ends. I'm telling it to you as it was told to me. Do you want to tell another one, a real or made-up one?



### The Story of Alexa and Takesi

by Clarita Kohen

Illustrated by Luisa D'Augusta

2. Hello! My name is Guillermo and I'm also called Willie. I'm going to

3. I hadn't been born yet when two families with their children came to this neighborhood. These families came from very, very far away.
4. The girl, Alexa, came from Xochimilco, a city in Mexico. The boy, Takesi, came from Kamakura, a city in Japan.
5. Alexa and Takesi met at school. They didn't know how to speak English yet. Alexa spoke Spanish and Takesi spoke Japanese.
6. The two of them started kindergarten at George Washington School. There they learned English. There were also bilingual classes, in English and in Japanese.
7. The teacher taught them lots of words in English: for *totitas* you say pancakes and for *agua* water, but for *koala* you say koala! How strange they sounded to them!
8. One day the teacher invited the children's parents to visit the school. She wanted the families to talk about their countries.
9. Alexa's parents showed colored serapes. Takesi's mother wore a kimono with pretty trimming.
10. The table was full of international food: corn tamales, guacamole, ham sandwiches, Oriental noodles, and a kilo of kiwis.
11. In Japan, it's traditional to eat with chopsticks. In Mexico, they eat with knives and forks.
12. Many people in Mexico like to sing "Cielito Lindo." In Japan, the song "Sakura" is very popular.
13. Takesi played the xylophone at the cultural festival. Alexa played the saxophone and everyone danced. Alexa and Takesi were excellent. Sign: **LONG LIVE THE CULTURAL FESTIVAL**
14. Many, many years have passed since the kindergarten class. Alexa and Takesi ended up getting married.
15. Everything I've told you is a true story. That's how my mama and papa met each other!