

My Sister Is Going to College



This book is part of the Tulliniliara Reading Series, developed by the Department of Family Services in Nunavut. The Tulliniliara Reading Series is a unique, Nunavut-developed literacy initiative that infuses awareness of skills, interests, and careers into a culturally appropriate reading program.

The Tulliniliara Reading Series was developed to support the reading level guidelines outlined in Uqalimaariuqsaniq, the Department of Education's reading program. Uqalimaariuqsaniq is a sequential and progressive Inuktitut reading program that supports students in their development as readers.

The Tulliniliara Reading Series will inform readers about jobs available in their community. It will also provide opportunities for readers to consider their own interests and skills when thinking about future work. Awareness of career possibilities at a young age will better prepare children to understand the opportunities that are open to them and the importance of staying in school.

These books represent the Department of Family Services' investment in the early development of our future workforce.

Book details

Level:	12
Text type:	Fiction
Subjects/themes:	Getting accepted to college, moving away to go to college, setting goals, planning for potential careers
Key features:	40 pages, past tense, dialogue, third-person point of view

My Sister Is Going to College



Written by
Larissa MacDonald

Illustrated by
Emma Pedersen

Sappa and his older sister, Bernice, did everything together. Even though Bernice was in high school, she let Sappa hang out with her all the time.

On school nights, Sappa and Bernice sat at the kitchen table and did their homework together.

When Sappa had a question, Bernice would help him. She was very smart and kind.

When Bernice needed help making a presentation for school look nice, she asked Sappa for help. He was very artistic.





Both Sappa and Bernice loved to read. Bernice always read thick novels. Sappa liked comic books. In the summer when they went camping on the land, they would each pack a book. If Sappa finished his comic book, Bernice would read out loud to him from her book.

One day after school, Sappa got home to find Bernice sitting at the kitchen table. She was looking at her laptop very closely.

“Sappa, guess what!” Bernice said as soon as she saw him. “I got into college!”

Sappa ran over and gave Bernice a huge hug. “Wow!” Sappa cried.





Bernice had been talking about college all year. She had worked very hard on her application. She was always checking her email, hoping that her acceptance letter would arrive.

Sappa and Bernice were jumping up and down when their mom came into the kitchen.

“What’s going on here?” she asked them, smiling.

“I’m going to college!”
Bernice said.

“Congratulations, Bernice!”
their mom said, hugging her.
“I’m so proud of you!”

“Thanks, Anaana!” Bernice
said. “There is so much I’ll have
to do to get ready. I’m going
to get my notebook and make
a list.”





“I have to call Tameka,”
Bernice said as she ran off down
the hall. “I can’t believe I get to
move to Ottawa!”

Suddenly, Sappa didn’t feel
happy. He had forgotten that
the college Bernice was going
to was in Ottawa. She would be
moving away from home.

He felt his throat tighten
like he was going to cry. He
didn’t want his sister to leave.

That night, Bernice's friend Tameka came over for supper.

"Hey Sappa," Tameka said as she sat on the floor. "Isn't that great news about your sister?"

"Not really," he said quietly. But Tameka didn't hear Sappa's reply. She was too busy hugging Bernice and squealing with excitement.





Tameka asked Bernice questions while Sappa's mom cut up pieces of maktaaq for everyone. She was a year younger than Bernice so she wasn't old enough to go to college yet.

"What college are you going to?" Tameka asked.

"It's called Nunavut Sivuniksavut," Bernice said. "It's a college just for Inuit. We get to spend a year learning all about our history and culture and language."

“Can’t you just learn that from Anaana?” Sappa asked.

Sappa and Bernice’s mother was an Inuk. Their father was from Newfoundland.

“I’ve learned so much from Anaana,” Bernice said.

“But at college you learn in a different way.”





“Don’t you just read a lot of books?” Sappa asked.

“Sure, I’ll read books and do assignments,” Bernice said. “But I’ll also get to learn from amazing instructors and share ideas with all the other Inuit in the college.”

“Think of all the cool people you’ll meet!” Tameka said.

“Won’t you miss your home?”
Sappa said. “And your friends?”
Won’t you miss me? he
thought sadly.

“I’ll still talk to them all the
time,” Bernice said. “I’m so excited
to move to a new place!”

Then she looked closely
at Sappa.

“What’s wrong?” Bernice
asked. Sappa was wiping
away tears.





“I don’t want you to leave,” Sappa said, sniffing. “Who is going to help me with my homework?”

“Oh, Sappa!” Bernice said and wrapped him in a big hug. “You can call me any time you want. I can help you with homework on the phone!”

Sappa knew she was right, but he was still sad. Bernice was his sister, but she was also his best friend.

“Sappa, did you know that Bernice is going to stay with Aja Hazel in Ottawa?” Sappa’s mom said.

“You could come and visit me sometime!” Bernice said.

Sappa looked up. He loved Aja Hazel. She lived in an apartment in Ottawa and they had visited a few times when they flew south. Knowing that his sister would be living with her made Sappa feel a little better.





“I can really come visit?”
Sappa asked.

“Of course,” Bernice said. “I can show you around Ottawa! We can go to the Parliament Buildings and all the museums. And we can play cards with Aja Hazel like we always do.”

That did sound like fun to Sappa. But he was still going to miss having his sister at home.

“Will you ever come back?”
Sappa asked.

“I’ll visit all the time, don’t worry,” Bernice said with a smile. “And I want to move back after college.”

“Bernice is going to be our premier one day.” Tameka grinned.

“Wow, really?” Sappa said.

“We’ll see!” Bernice laughed. “I want to become a leader in Nunavut and make this an even better place to live.”





Sappa suddenly felt very hopeful. He was excited for his sister to go to college.

Sappa, Bernice, and Tameka spent the rest of supper talking about what jobs they would like to do in the future.

Bernice talked about why she wanted to be a politician. Her class had visited the Legislative Assembly in Iqaluit. She enjoyed learning about how politicians made decisions for the territory.

Tameka wanted to become a translator. Her grandfather spoke mostly Inuktitut. She grew up speaking Inuktitut at home and wanted to help others learn it, too.

Sappa thought he could be a teacher. His sister had taught him so many things. He wanted to do the same thing for other young people one day.

But he also loved to draw. Maybe he could be an artist. Or maybe he could be both!





“Do you think I could go to college when I’m older?” Sappa asked his mom.

“Of course!” she said.

“If you keep working hard in school and helping out in the community, you can do anything you want in the future!”

“Can I see your college when I come visit you in Ottawa?” Sappa asked Bernice.

“Definitely,” Bernice said and put her arm around her little brother.

Many months later, Sappa flew to Ottawa to visit Bernice. They went for a walk on Parliament Hill. They visited the National Gallery of Canada where they saw carvings made by an artist from their community.

Bernice took Sappa to see the college. As he walked through the halls with Bernice, he began to imagine being a student there one day, too.



In the evening, they gathered at Aja Hazel's house with some of Bernice's classmates. Sappa had brought maktaaq with him from home that he shared with everyone.

Sappa was very happy that Bernice had gone to college.



Published in Canada by **Inhabit Education**
www.inhabiteducation.com

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Printed and bound in Canada

ISBN: 978-0-2287-0435-5






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