

You Want My Pants?

by Yasilis Castillo

New York City Department of Education - School 2, at Phipps

It was my sister Iranian's birthday. We gathered together in her house with just our family members and close friends. After we cut the cake and sang "Happy Birthday," we sat chatting and listening to music. Suddenly, we heard someone knocking at the door. Ramona, my sister's mother-in-law, a very sweet and caring woman, who was here in the USA for the very first time, said to us with a big smile, "I'll go to open the door."

For a moment, we didn't hear anything. My brother-in-law called on her, "Mom! Who is it?" There was no answer. He called again with a little concern in his voice, "Mom! Where are you?" There was still no answer. So he stood up and went to the front door.

Over there by the door, Ramona was standing against the wall with a frightened face. Her little body was shaking. She was so scared that she even didn't look at her son at all. Meanwhile, we were all waiting for any surprise presents or maybe a new guest. But we were so surprised to see the new guests, who came in just like they were in their own house. They were four police officers!

After a "Good evening," they asked everyone to stand up and show them IDs. My sister asked what was going on, the answer was only one word---"ID."

Ramona was standing next to me and asking me in Spanish what was going on. She started to cry. One of the police came over to her with a very demanding voice, "Ms. I need to see your ID. Any document with your picture or passport."

New to this country and without English, Ramona looked very nervous and confused. She repeated, "You wanta my p-a-n-t-s?!" The officer authorized his answer with confidence, "Your passport!"

Ramona hesitated for a second, but started to unbutton her pants. Her humiliation made her cast her eyes on the floor. We were shocked. All of us, including the police, looked at each other. We were all puzzled. Suddenly, my sister Iranian yelled, "What are you doing? Are you crazy?" But Ramona said, "He said PASSPORT, so he wants me to give him my passport" Later Ramona said, "I only know three words in English: Thank you, Sorry and hungry. The other new words I learned are often mixed together. These are my passports!" She pointed to her pants. We all burst into laugh.

The police were leaving. Their last question was, "Is this Apartment 3B?" We answered in one voice, "No! This is 2B!"

The police had the wrong apartment number.