



The Letter
Trish Cooke

The Windrush generation is a term used to refer to people who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1971. In this speech, it's May 15th, 1962, and nine-year-old Clare has been sent for to travel from the Caribbean, to join her mother and father in the UK.

CLARE: I am excited about the trip to Englan' but I thought me, and Grannie and Millie were all going to go together- but the letter I read from Mammy to Grannie says different...

(She reads)

Dear Mama,

We are sending the money to pay for Clare's passage to England. Make all the arrangements. Cecil and myself look forward to seeing our eldest girl.

'But Grannie, I can't go by myself' I say, and Grannie says, 'Your Mammy sen' for you. You must go. Millie will soon follow'. 'But I don't want to go to Englan'!' I say. But she doesn't listen.

My Mammy and Daddy are strangers to me/ They go to Englan' when I was small. They don't know me, and I don't know them, so why must I leave my Grannie and my sister, to go to them?

(Pleading) 'Grannie, I want you and Millie to come too. Let's all go together!' I say. But she explains how Mammy and Daddy can't afford to send for all of us to travel together. She say they will send for Millie later.

I beg 'Please Grannie don't send me to Englan'! Let me stay home, in Dominica! I will die without you, Grannie!

But Grannie tell me I have to go. She say I have to be with my Mammy and Daddy in a new place. A new home. I must go to an English school. She tell me I have to forget about Dominica. But I will never forget! Never!

(Pause)

Millie looks at me different now. She say if it was her, she would never leave me. I tell her I don't have a choice. 'I hate you!' she say. I know she doesn't mean it. But it still hurts. My eyes are pricking me, the tears are burning but I keep my eyes open wide, so the tears don't fall. I want to be brave like Grannie tell me I should be.

'I will write to you every day' I say to Millie, and she calls me a liar. She tells me I will forget her as soon as I reach England and go to all the fancy places. She tells me I will become an English girl. I want to let her know that I will never change, but I don't know how.