

Flor's Journey to Independence
Modified Version
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Chapter 4

After work, Flor went home. She thought about money. She only had \$50 in cash. That was not enough to last for the rest of the month. Suddenly, she was startled by a loud knock at her front door.

"Who is it?"

"Flor, it's me, Felipe!"

Flor rushed to the door. She opened it and embraced her brother, Felipe.

"Flor, we were so worried about you!" Felipe walked into the living room of the empty apartment. *"What is going on here?"*

Shame filled Flor. She told Felipe everything.

"You left Betina with Lena? What if she gives her to Ricardo? Why didn't you call me?" said Felipe.

Flor felt exhausted. She sat down on her blanket. She put her face in her hands. Felipe sat down next to her. He told Flor he knew Ricardo had another woman. Flor was suffocated by anger and shame. Felipe wanted Flor to go home with him. He lived in a little house with his girlfriend and two men she did not know. It was not a good place for a child. Flor did not want to live there.

Flor and Felipe talked and argued for a long time. Felipe was worried that Ricardo's family would take Betina away. Flor promised to call Ricardo and ask for money. Felipe agreed, but he said, *"Don't leave Betina with Lena all week. Tomorrow you can tell me what he says."*

Felipe left. Flor sat and thought. Ricardo must help her. She needed at least \$400 a month from him. In the morning, she called him. He answered the phone, but he refused to talk to her. *“Call me later,”* he said. *“Call me at 6:00 this evening.”*

Flor felt terrible. All day she worried about talking to Ricardo. She made many mistakes at work. Finally, it was time to call Ricardo. When he answered the telephone, she forgot everything she wanted to say. *“Why did you leave us?”* she cried. *“We need help! Give me back our things! Betina needs you!”*

Ricardo’s voice was ugly. *“I am not coming back to you or giving you money. The things we had in the apartment are mine. And, I have a new mother for Betina.”*

Flor hung up the phone. She wiped her eyes. She finished her shift, went to Lena’s, and got Betina. When Felipe knocked on the apartment door, she was ready.

“You were right,” she said. *“Let’s go.”*