

Chapter 5

My Journal, Thursday, September 18

I am so happy to be in the English class. I will work hard and learn much English. I like my job and I want to do better.

Karen, Flor's English teacher, translated Flor's journal entry into English and wrote a response.

I know how hard it is to learn a new language, but little by little you will get better. I am very happy that you are in the class. Thank you for coming.

English was difficult. This class was very different from Flor's school in Mexico. But it was cheerful and welcoming, and Betina liked it, too. Flor already made a friend, Carmen, an outgoing woman from Argentina. Carmen was in the class last year. The two decided to go out for coffee at the bagel shop with their daughters.

They got their drinks and sat at a table outside. Flor had many questions about the class and the students. Carmen answered them all. Then she said, "*You look tired, Flor.*"

"I am. It's been a hard week. I started my job and English classes, and Betina started preschool, and. . ."

Suddenly, she was telling Carmen about all that had happened since she came back from Mexico. About the empty apartment and Ricardo leaving. About her job and Lena being so helpful by taking Betina to her house so Flor could work. About her money worries, living in Felipe's noisy, crowded house and fears that Ricardo would take Betina. And about

her hopes that she could find a good baby-sitter for Betina and save enough money to find her own apartment. Everything. Carmen was a good listener.

Carmen said, “*Look at the girls. They are having fun together. While you were talking, I was thinking. Maybe I could baby-sit Betina. We only live three blocks away. I'll talk to my husband. What do you think?*”

Flor was astonished but hesitant. “*Thank you. Everything is happening so fast. I need time to think.*”

“*No problem. Here's my phone number. Call me.*”

Flor and Betina went back to school. Lena was waiting for them. Ricardo was there, too. Betina ran into her father's arms. Flor knew that Ricardo was a good father. What had happened to their little family? Flor said good-bye and hurried to work.

It was busy. Flor kept thinking about her problems and began to make mistakes with the orders. Linda was nice when she talked to Flor during break, but Flor knew Linda was warning her to pay more attention, or she would lose her job.