

Flor's Journey to Independence
Modified Version
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Chapter 7

My Journal, Monday, October 22

Today I am very angry because the father of my child no do come saturday. I *le dije* why? The *dijo* because *tengo* much work. I think he no do like my brother. The week last, my brother y the father fight.

Karen:

He didn't (did not) come at all? That is terrible. I understand why you are angry. Betina needs to see her father.

November came. The days got shorter. The leaves turned red and yellow, then brown, and then fell to the ground. One day Carmen entered their classroom with a big smile on her face. "*Flor!*" she said. "*There's a studio apartment for rent in my building. It has a kitchen, bathroom, and living room, but no bedroom. The rent is only \$400 a month. Isn't that great?*"

"*Yes! But I don't have very much money saved.*"

Carmen said, "*The manager said you have to pay the first and last months' rent. There's no lease.*"

"*Is it good to have a lease?*"

“Sometimes. The lease can protect you if you and your landlord have a disagreement.”

“I’ll have to ask Ricardo to help me,” said Flor. “Do you think the manager will hold it for me?”

Carmen said, “I’ll ask him. He’s nice.”

Later, Flor was at work when Linda called out, *“Flor! The phone is for you. It’s an emergency!”*

Flor’s heart stopped. She hurried to the phone. *“Yes?”*

“This is Carmen. Betina is hurt. Come to the emergency room at Denver General Hospital.”

“Oh, my god. I’m coming.” Flor ran to David’s office. *“I have to go. My daughter is in the emergency room,”* she said.

David stood up. *“I’ll take you,”* he said. *“Do you want to call anyone first?”*

Flor called Ricardo. He met them at the hospital. David went back to work. Flor and Ricardo hurried down the hall to Room 3. Carmen and Rosy were sitting beside Betina’s hospital bed. She had a bandage on her head. Her eyes were closed. *“What happened?”* Flor asked.

“Oh Flor!” said Carmen. *“I was on the Internet. Rosy and Betina asked if they could play on the balcony. I said yes. I told them not to go near the stairs. Suddenly, Rosy started to scream. I ran outside. Betina fell down the concrete stairs! She was bleeding from her head. I yelled for help and the manager came out. He called 911.”*

“Is anything broken?” asked Flor. *“Her arms, her legs?”*

“No. But she’s still unconscious. She has a concussion.”

Flor and Ricardo watched their beautiful daughter breathe. Finally, Carmen had to go home. Ricardo said, *“Why did you pick her to take care of Betina? This never would have happened at my mother’s house.”*

Rage filled Flor. *“It was an accident! And anyway, the best person to take care of Betina is me. But you made sure she can’t have me. And now, who’s going to pay for this?”*

“I take care of my child. I pay for her health insurance. It will cover her hospital bills and tests. All you think of is money.” Ricardo spoke in a harsh whisper.

“Why didn’t you tell me about the insurance? I’m her mother! That’s just like you, always sneaking around.”

Flor glared at Ricardo over the bed. He glared back.

From the bed, Betina moved. She coughed and opened her eyes. *“Mama? Papa?”*