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TITLE:

"BAD & SELFISH"

A FICTION NOVEL

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PARAGRAPH ABOUT THE BOOK

THE ABUSES OF A YOUNG WOMAN PREGNANT, AND AN UNWANTED SON, MADE THE FATHER BECOME WICKED. BUT WHAT THEIR DESTINY HAD IN PREPARATION THEY NEVER IMAGINED, THAT THEY WERE HAVING TWINS.
THIS MADMAN SOLD HIS DAUGHTER AND PROVOKED HIS SON TO USE DRUGS.

CHAPTER 1

Friday the 13th, the month of June 1985

An evening that apparently is beginning to clear up, from the strong rains that dragged by the month of May. A beautiful young lady named Cazilda with brown eyes; her hair was black, her skin Indian cinnamon, and only twenty years. Cazilda, washing some dishes and already on the last days of her pregnancy, in a house with only two small rooms, one bed and a dirty floor, zinc ceiling and a table with two chairs.

One pot cooking a few beans. Cazilda was tormented by her thoughts, anguished to know that another boy was coming to suffer in this world. As the months went by, her hair kept falling off. She was not like every normal pregnant woman.

When evening came, Cazilda was washing dishes. In a second she became panicked as she heard the voice that tormented her from the main door, she could hear steps and screams, demanding food. It was her executioner, Rosendo Gauilan. A strong man and robust of twenty-five years of age. The man is a mix of white and Indian. "Your food is ready", answered Cazilda. The face of that man was antisocial. Every time he returned from work, he would turn more violent. Cazilda was serving some beans when her contractions began. It seems like the birth of her creature had arrived. Even though it had no name, Rosendo did not want it.

Cazilda asked him to help her. The pain was too intense and all she wanted was to sit down. Rosendo with all his calmness looked at her

and said "I can't eat at peace, better it is for you little one to be born dead". Cazilda got strength and held on to the chair however, she could. Her belly leaned on the table.

"How is it possible that you wished death upon your own child? Our son is an angel. A blessing, what you are doing is blasphemy" she cried. Those words just made him get angrier. He got up from the chair, and punched the table. "Listen to me very good, we inherit sin since the day we are born to this world," said Rosendo, "Look at this misery, all this is mere hell". Every second she would be close to fainting, until she finally did. In addition, even though her pain was intense, she said, "Being in this world is not hell, being in this world is a divine blessing".

Cazilda's last words were like the water spilling out of a cup. Rosendo turned the table and Cazilda instantly fell to the floor. When he saw her on the floor, he became afraid. He caressed her face. Since she did not respond, he picked her up and held her between his arms. He turned and went out running. The tempest started! The sky was mad, thundering and lightning scared the night.

A taxi was going by slowly and without thinking, Rosendo stood in the middle of the street, not caring if he was run over. Already, in the public general hospital, at 9:30pm of that night, it was declared that two creatures, certified twins, were born.

Those angels cried for the warmth of their mother as Rosendo walked up and down the waiting room. Cazilda was in good condition. Dr. Rivas ordered her to absolute rest. "How are my children?" asked Cazilda. "They are under observation", answered the doctor. Later on, he went to the reception room where Rosendo was in an impatient mood. "How is my woman?" asked Rosendo. "The woman is fine," answered the Dr. Rivas, but I have to congratulate you. "Why?" asked

Rosendo. "They are twins, a boy and a girl". Rosendo, with both hands on his head said, "What am I going to do? This can not be".

The thunders and lightning had Rosendo out of control. Desperation made him take off running, without thinking of anything else.

After some hours, Rosendo made it home. Tequila in his hands cursing everything. Two days went by that way, and he continued to drink. It was Sunday, almost dark and with her children her arms, Cazilda returned home finding Rosendo laid on the floor.

Illuminada and Oscar were the names of the children. With the help of a good samaritan, Cazilda could bring her twins home. With tears that came out of her sad eyes, she bowed her head asking God to have mercy upon her children.

It was almost morning when Rosendo woke up from his drunkenness. Stumbling with everything in front of him, he went over to the kitchen, grabbed a gallon of water and took a long, hard drink. He sat down and fell asleep with his head leaning on the table.

Cazilda could not sleep, alert to the kids noise so they did not wake up Rosendo. The fear was terrible. She did not know how Rosendo would react. The next day, early in the morning, he heard a laugh. He walked up to the room and was surprised to see his children, thrown in the corner of the floor.

That made him nostalgic and a little dizzy. He picked up Illuminada, laid her on the bed. Then walked with Oscar between his arms. He drank some water. The heartbeat and nerves exposed by Cazilda, made Rosendo aware that she was awake.

"Get up", said Rosendo. Cazilda with her dry lips got up. Their looks met and shaking out of fear, she stretched her arms to carry Oscar. Rosendo sighed and said, "Lay the children on the bed and we will lay on the floor, tomorrow we will talk".

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To Cazilda it was the beginning of the day, and it was impossible not to confront Rosendo. He was bi-polar. In the small kitchen, Cazilda was face to face with her executioner. He looked at her and said, "Make me something to eat". The first thing Cazilda touched was the coffee pot.

Her nerves made her spill all the coffee. Rosendo reacted by saying, "Your not even good at that, not even to make coffee".

Now I have to work more so I can feed your children. "I could work", she said. "You work?" responded Rosendo, "As what? Washing clothes for people who can pay. Like the neighbors do?". "Yes", answered Cazilda, "that would be the best".

CHAPER 2

The Federal District evolving even faster, the corporation expanding all over Mexico, the border contaminated with drug traffic, brothels violating the law, more children disappearing everyday, the state and federal government were blind and def. Even more violations were in Cuidad Juarez.

Illuminada and Oscar, two teenagers with only fifteen years, were living in mere hell, observing Rosendo drinking and abusing their mother. They were frustrated of the physical and verbal abuse. Those teenagers held a grudge against their own father. Illuminada looked just like her brother, with long and soft hair.

Rosendo's only worry was soccer. The future of the twins was becoming lost. Their future was errant and uncertain. Sending his children to school was not a priority to him. A Friday, not like any other, it was the eve of December 23rd. Those teenagers had only one pair of shoes, thanks to their mother's effort.

What they yearned the most was their father's affection. The material things were not the most important thing. Evening came, the party started. The children were playing, the birds flying, and the brothels were opening. Oscar accompanied Rosendo to was his car in one of the most dangerous zones.

Where the unthinkable could happen, young people drinking, drugging, having unprotected sex and exposed to sexual transmitted diseases. It was easy for Rosendo to desire luxurious cars that drove in and out with absolute discretion. Rosendo saw a complete business on the youth.

In his evil eyes, a reflection of Illuminada. His thought was to bring his daughter to present her services as other young girls did. Illuminada,

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at her young age, already had the illusions to be a professional. Every night when she laid down, she would ask, "When would the day come that I' am old enough?"

Rosendo and Oscar arrived at evening. That man, like always, felt he had the authority to walk all over and humiliate his children. Even though, knowing Oscar was tired, he sent him to buy his beer. With fear, Cazilda tells him "Rosendo allows Oscar to eat first". "It is your mothers fault that I have to work more!" he approached, "Now, move, go get what I asked for, and tomorrow you have to go to work".

Rosendo's mind was out of control.

Saturday morning, the streets on that neighborhood were calm. You could hear no commotion. There was something more that clear. The walls were painted with figures. Between them, the image of La Patrona de Mexico. Oscar just looked at her sadly. The fear was noticeable in his face. Oscar carried a great deal of pain in his heart. The frustration, disillusionment, the pain did not allow him to think clearly. Tired of walking, he sat at the wrong place. It was already eleven in the morning, when the music started. There were women walking up and down the beach with t-shirts and very short, thigh pants.

Lust, greed, prostitution, the American cancer on that neighborhood. A Ford Expedition, escorted by another three vehicles made their way in. An indigent and some other people looked out the window. Every one knew he was a big fish. All those vehicles parked in one single file.

Oscar, observing every move. He, being an adolescent, had no maturity to contend with everything happening in the Colonial Real.

On the back of that, Ford was a man with a lopsided hat. He had a dry face and dark glasses. That mane would snap his fingers and

everything was at his feet. A middle-aged man, approached with three

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young men, ages 15 to 18 years of age. "Sir, how may we help you?" The man replied, "Are those calves fresh?" "Yes sir", answered the man replied. "Well, bring them in," said the boss.

At the very moment that the big fish exited the Colonia Real, every movement would go back to normal. A couple of young men walked where Oscar was sitting.

At knifepoint, they got him off the road. They put the knife at his neck and asked him, "What are you looking for?", "I'm looking for work". Everyone laughed and said, "What, do we look like bodegueros?". His nerves caused him to piss himself. To those young men it was the greatest joke. "Please, don't do anything to me". Their answer was a couple of shoves.

Oscar ran and already suffocating, stopped in front of the apartment building afraid to go in the house. There were two problems bothering him. Not having money and having the certitude that Rosendo would not allow him to eat. It was terrible not to bring money because in Rosendo's rage, even his mother would pay. It was already evening and Rosendo started to drink.

Oscar went in to the house and Cazilda said, "Son, come, eat something." Oscar did not allow himself be seen by Rosendo, but Cazilda told him, "Son, after you eat, talk to your father". Oscar stood in front of Rosendo with his hands behind his back. Rosendo asked him, "Where is my money?" "Father, I couldn't work", that was enough for Rosendo to beat him.

After the beating, he threw twenty pesos and sent him to buy some beer. Rosendo, on his rage, pushed a little stand that Cazilda had to hide Iluminada's books and mascot. To their misfortune, Rosendo found them. With his penetrating voice, he called them. Iluminada's legs were trembling.

Mother and daughter stood in front of Rosendo. When she saw the books, everything collapsed. "What does this mean? I don't want to think that you are sending Iluminada to a supposed school, are you concealing her?" said Rosendo. Cazilda inclined her head as to show fear. "Yes, Rosendo, it is my fault. I gave her permission. Education is very important and we don't have the right to deny it to them".

Rosendo, to begin, smacked her in the face and said, "Who do you think you are to talk to me like that? Do you know what I am going to do with your daughter? That she may eat tomorrow. She is going to work with me!" Cazilda begged Rosendo to allow Iluminada to finish the year.

She is only a little girl, she is your daughter. Oscar came in with the beer and Rosendo snatched them from him, sat down and kept on watching soccer. Rosendo yelled, "Get out of my sight!" Cazilda, crying, started hugging her children.

Oscar thought about many things. Among them was to take his fathers life but something inside him would always make him stop. It was his conscience. Just to know that the man, even though severe and merciless, was his father. The anxiety was eating him up inside. Oscar asked his mother to leave the house but Cazilda didn't have the courage from Rosendo's evil life. She was like every abused woman. The physical, verbal, and above all, the emotional trauma, did not allow her to think clearly. The abuser had his results; his victims depended completely on them.

Oscar went out crying. His world was a complete cosmos of darkness. With nowhere to go, he walked alone. Cold, with nothing to eat, walking by a house, he took refuge. Just like the insurgents call it where they live, sleep and eat in precarious conditions. Oscar stopped and walked in nervously to find something of a surprise. He had

walked right into the real underworld. In a corner, two young men were smoking marijuana.

Pancho and Tiburon. Those were names of the two young men he saw in the corner. Tiburon, since he saw Oscar, asked him to join him and sit down. Oscar felt like he had no other choice. He found company, house and at last tranquility in this refuge that all kinds of people habitate. He is falling into the mercy of the cancer of drugs.

Oscar was about to fall to the grip that in many occasions when you come out of, there are consequences. Pancho and Tiburon called him "Come, friend, what is your name?" "I'm Oscar". With no more, Pancho passed him the cigarette and told him, "this will elevate you to the very sky and you will see that all your problems will become obsolete", "smoke my friend" said Tiburon.

Minutes later the laughter began. A young girl lying on the floor, sick, needed heroin.

Oscar was tranquil and relaxed. The preoccupation had Cazilda extremely nervous. Cazilda did not want to demonstrate her fear to Iluminada. "Finish eating, my daughter, before your father realizes that Oscar is not here". After a long period of time, Rosendo, bottle in hand, threw himself on the bed, falling into a deep sleep. Time that Cazilda, together with Iluminada, rush to go out into the Colonia and search for Oscar.

After a couple of hours without any results, they decided to return home. Cazilda could not lay down without knowing about Oscar. She decided to sit down in the kitchen and wait for her son. As the hours went by, her cry was imminent. "Why can't I be happy? Why do my children have to endure this type of life?" She fell to sleep waiting for Oscar to come home through the door.

Six o'clock on Sunday morning. Radiant sun, the chickens were already making their noise, birds singing, the replanted of the sunlight was coming in through the holes of the house. That made Cazilda wake up. When she lifted her head with fear, she looked around, saying "Oscar, son, where are you? What have you done?" She got up from the chair with the high hope that her son might be asleep. Many things went through her mind. "Where did he sleep? How is he doing? Did something happen to him? Oh no, Vigencita! Don't let anything happen to him!" Slowly in a low voice, Cazilda sent Iluminada to look for Oscar. Iluminada walked through the door with no results. Iluminada started to cry, "Mother, why doesn't our father love us?" "Why is he so violent? Is it because he drinks?" Cazilda had no answer. Because her mind was not clear.

The best answer Cazilda had was a hug. With an astonished voice, she said to Iluminada, "None of this is forever. Do not cry because your father will hear you. Give me your hands and let's pray, let's ask Yahweh, the God almighty of Israel, the King of the Heavens and Earth, to have mercy upon us, that when Rosendo asks about Oscar, he may take it calmly"

CHAPTER 3

In the refuge house, it was already seven o'clock in the morning. Oscar and the indigents began to awake. Oscar was very hungry, he looked around thinking to himself, "What have I done? Oh, what a head ache I have" The mota and the beer had caused him to have a great hangover.

Everything was thrown on the floor, the cigarette butts, the beer cans, the syringes and the rats eating breadcrumbs. A 17-year-old girl was puking, she needed heroin. Pancho and Tiburon made their move. They gave Oscar food, smokes and shelter. Now Oscar was tied up to them. It was more than clear. Nothing was free in life.

Pancho and Tiburon didn't have a cent to their name. Stealing for them was something of a dally vice. It was a daily attribute they have had all their lives. Monday came, very early; Oscar accompanied Pancho and Tiburon, who for some days were watching a middle age couple called Artemio and Rosa. They had an arts and crafts store. It was already 8:30 pm and the couple was about to close the store. Rosa was holding a picture in her hands. It was a picture of her lost children. They disappeared years ago, a time when the family was happy. Artemio hugged Rosa and between tears, told her "We will be together until death do us part. Destiny will not prevail over us!" At the instant that Artemio was closing the front door, gun in hand, shoving and screaming, Tiburon asked him "Where is the money?" Artemio pushed Rosa behind him, reached in the air and said, "Calm down friend, anything you want, just take it"

Tiburon saw that Rosa had a medallion and in his attempt to pull it off Artemio grabbed his hand. Pancho, with no fear nor remorse, shot Artemio. He fell to the ground instantly. Rosa could not bear to see her

husband lying on the floor in a pool of blood, she felt a great pain in her chest and fell right next to her husband's now still body. Tiburon pulled her medallion off her chest with no hesitation.

That medallion was unique in a way. There was no other in existence like that one. In the middle of it, there was the image of the Virgin de la Guadalupe with the names of Rosa's children. Artemio, even though hurt badly, managed to get up, "Oh God, NO! Rosa, you can't leave me! You promised me! HELP ME!" screamed Artemio.

Rosa managed to endure the stroke. She is on intensive therapy. Artemio would not leave her side. He could see her through the glass window.

Tiburon, with no shame, hung the medallion around his neck. The chain together with the medallion was a present from Artemio as a memory of the day that their children disappeared. The boy was ten years old and the girl was only five.

Those three distributed the money that was collected. Over a couple of pesos, they troubled their lives. They headed to the Colonia Real to buy some mota and beer and after to the refugee house.

At home, Rosendo was angry. He wanted to have Oscar face to face that he may unload his rage. The Colonia Real, was known for its immense violence. Rosendo began his quarrel with Iluminada. He was determined to sell her to the highest bidder. His ideas were diabolic. Oscar saw Rosendo, shoving his sister, not knowing that this could be the last time he would see her. When Oscar saw him, he ran and hid. As Rosendo made his way to the center of the Colonia, people would look at her like hungry piranhas. To many, she was fresh meat and with a big value. Rosendo didn't really know where he was standing. When he finally realized where he was, he wanted so bad to run out, but it was too late. Some man rounded him asking, "What do you

want, old man?" "I want no problems, let me pass" answered Rosendo. At that time, he turned around the corner, and saw the well know Expedition. Everyone became intimidated, as if they had seen the devil. The vehicle came to an abrupt stop and the window slowly came down. It was the man with the lopsided hat.

With an authoritative voice the man asked, "How much do you want for that calf?" Rosendo didn't think about it twice. With no resentment Rosendo answered, "Mr., pay what you think is convenient" Iluminada trembled out of fear. "No father, don't sell me" Rosendo looked at her and with hate of this entire world in his eyes told her, "its better that you leave with the Mr., otherwise your mother will pay for your disobedience.

"No please, father, don't do any harm to my mother. I'll go with the Mr." That man took his glasses, opened a small suitcase and threw Rosendo a hand full of pesos. On her knees and holding Rosendo by his feet, Iluminada implored him not to leave her.

That man has much experience with young girls. The first thing he told her was "Don't be afraid, nothing will harm you" "Mr., please, do not hurt me" implied Iluminada, "Who are you? What do you want from me?". "My name is Erminio and I promise no harm will come to you". Cazilda had swollen eyes from crying so much. Rosendo came home with a bottle in hand around mid-night. Drunk, he looked at Cazilda ignoring her. "Where is my daughter?" she asked, "What have you done with her?" Rosendo would not answer her and in desperation, she grabbed him by his shirt. Rosendo's reaction was to push her and hit her with the bottle over her head. Cazilda fell unconscious onto the floor.

As Rosendo saw her laid out on the floor, he thought he had killed her. His cowardness made him run out the door saying, "It was your fault!"

Without looking, he tried to cross the street but he was run over by a taxi.

After a few minutes, Cazilda woke up from the blow she took to the head. Rosendo had been taken to the hospital where his twin children were born. He had multiple wounds, his legs were smashed. To Cazilda, her headache was not so great. Her biggest pain was in her soul. To know that the man she once loved, took away what she loved the most.

Cazilda wrapped a rag around her head trying to stop some of the bleeding. Without thinking, she ran out of the house like a mad woman searching for Iluminada, not minding what time it was. On the streets, without a course, she started asking everyone she came across. She would give them the description of her children. That same night, at mid-night, Oscar and his newfound friends, Pancho and Tiburon, were on their way to the Colonia Real to buy some drugs. They started from marijuana, now they wanted to acquire cooked cocaine.

Drug that is a hallucinogen. To Cazilda's misfortune, Tiburon saw her. He was caressing his own hands with a great desire of sexually attacking her like a predator. Pancho said to Oscar, "Look, we have fresh meat, are you in on this? Or what?" Oscar, even though participated on the store robbery, had never raped a woman like the they have.

As Tiburon came closer to Cazilda, Pancho took out his nicely sharpened sevillana. Oscar, with the little sight he had due to the drugs, was able to recognize his mother. Oscar screamed, "That's my mother!" Tiburon just looked at them and smiled. It was obvious that it didn't matter to him who she was. "My son," said Cazilda. Oscar answered in a low, childish tone, "Mama" and hugged her. Those rapists rounded them, surrounding them from each side. Oscar placed

Cazilda behind him and told them, "You not going to touch her" and like a animal he went toward Tiburon and in the struggle, the chain fell off Tiburon's neck. Pancho had Cazilda with the sevillana to her neck, while grabbing onto her crouch. There was an uproar. Oscar yelled for help and Pancho pushed Cazilda and stabbed Oscar on the arm. They took off running.

This place was not their territory. They knew that they could be in major trouble. "Mama, are you alright?" "Yes, my son, I'm fine. Look what they did to you". "It doesn't matter; I'm doing better now that I see you". "Come on; let's go to the hospital so they can heal you". "Mama, what are you looking for here? Why do you have that rag on your head?" At Cazilda's feet, there was the medallion, the image was shining. Cazilda picked it up and squeezed it in her fist.

Already in the hospital, was the same Dr., Dr. Rivas. With his gray hair and glasses, who aided them. He applied fifteen stitches to her head. The sedatives made Cazilda go into a deep sleep. While she was sleeping, she had a dream. In a dream of hers, she could see Iluminada asking for help and chained up. There was a seal on her forehead that said, "You are my property". Cazilda would stretch her hands but could not reach her.

At first hour, Dr. Rivas talked to Cazilda. In his speech, he mentioned to her that her son was out of danger but her husband would have to remain a minimum of two weeks. "What are you talking about Dr.? About my husband? Is my husband here?" she cried. "You didn't know?" he said in a questionable manner. "I thought that what happened to you was related to the same accident. I am very sorry about Rosendo, but he will never walk again". "Dr., I want to see my son". "First, let me mention that your son was under the influence of drugs and we had to detox him". Cazilda entered the room and Oscar

couldn't talk. When he noticed his mother, he tried to take his oxygen mask off. Cazilda held his hand and said to him, "Son, everything will be okay. I'm with you. Sleep, I will stay here while you sleep". Oscar went back into unconscious sleep and Cazilda left to visit Rosendo. He was sleeping, she looked at him with pity. She left the hospital and returned home with the hope of finding Iluminada.

Cazilda rested the whole day. She had to get better because she knew what was coming her way was heavy. At night, she returned to the hospital. Visited Oscar, who was feeling much better, then went to Rosendo's room. His reaction to seeing her was surprising. He thought that Cazilda was dead. Cazilda, at first glance of seeing him, stood by his bed. All she wanted to know, "Where is Iluminada?" Rosendo's answer, "What does it matter now? What matters is you have to help me now. I am like this, it's your fault!" Cazilda asked him, "How is it possible that you have no mercy upon your own daughter? If you don't tell me where my girl is, you are going to be all by yourself and I don't believe that you are under and condition to order me to do anything! I'm going to see my son. I hope when I come back, you tell me what you did to her". Cazilda, together with Oscar, consoled each other.

Oscar asked his mother for Iluminada, "Why isn't she with you?" From his father he could believe it because Rosendo never loved them. Cazilda left crying just to hear Iluminada's name. Oscar asked, "Mama, why are you crying? What's wrong? Where is she?" Cazilda answered, "Oh, my son, only if you knew". "If I knew what, Mama? Tell me!"

Cazilda answered with sad tone, "Your father took her from me and I don't have any clue to where she is". Oscar's eyes filled up with hate and sorrowful tears. He tried to stand up to go look for Rosendo and make him pay for all the damage he has done but Cazilda stopped him and told him, "Don't worry, I will look for her". Oscar replied, "Mama,

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you just told me that you don't know where Iluminada is". Cazilda tried to calm him down and said, "I know that your father will tell me where your sister is. Son, I have to go for some time, I'm going to talk to the Dr."

Cazilda spoke to the Dr. and asked him when she could take her son home. The Dr. said, "Tonight. Your son is young and strong. Lucky his wound is healing with little medication and that will not be a problem to take him home".

Cazilda asked Dr. Rivas for permission to speak to Rosendo and he permitted her a few minutes. Cazilda entered the room and said, "Rosendo, do you have my answer?" Rosendo just looked at her and told her, "Okay, I will tell you what you want to know. I sold her to a man". Cazilda asked him in anger, "A man! Who is this man? What is his name?" Rosendo's reply, "The only thing I can tell you is that he has a black Ford Expedition and always frequents the Colonia Tepito. He wears glasses and a lopsided hat".

Rosendo made clear, "I don't think that you can get her back". Cazilda told him, "If I don't get my daughter back, you will stay by yourself like the dog you are". Cazilda exited the room crying and asking herself, "What am I going to do? That Colonia is very dangerous. How am I going to enter there? My God, How?"

Cazilda took Oscar home and told him that Rosendo was in the hospital crippled and that she needed to bring him home. She may obtain the truth that may help find Iluminada. Oscar did not agree but because of his love for his mother, he accepted. Three weeks went by and Oscar was helping his mother as best as he could. She would wash clothes for money but it was barely enough. Her primary thoughts were to find her daughter and how she would get into Tepito without being assaulted.

CHAPTER 4

By blessing or luck, Erminio saw problems in Iuminada and something even stronger. Even though it seemed impossible, Iuminada looked like his mother when she was young. Something in him told him not to harm her. Erminio could notice that Iuminada was a teenager, pure and without malice like the other girls. Since he saw her, he felt that she would be better off with him rather than with her father, Rosendo. No good father would give up his daughter like Rosendo did.

Cazilda picked up her hair, put on some of Rosendo's clothes and tried to act like a man. That would be her best option to go into the Tepito. Like a newspaper seller, with a couple of cents in her bag, she bought a stack of forty-eight newspapers and began her crosswind path. Her nerves had her very scared. Only her motherly love for her daughter gave her the courage that she needed. The strength she would get from the image that she was wearing around her neck. Cazilda began to sell newspapers dressed like a man.

The music was very loud on the streets. Some stores would sell clothes. There were some men talking about soccer. Everything was normal. What happens in Tepito stays in Tepito. Cazilda, always holding onto her medallion was alert to any Expedition. She was having very little luck. She was already tired of walking the streets and decided to rest in a corner as tranquil as she could without being alerted to any rambunctious crowds.

Distracted, she thought that Rosendo had lied to her and out of nowhere, a black Expedition that she was looking for, almost hit her. There was an abrupt stop and a scream inside the Ford. The frightening noise made Cazilda fall to the ground and in the process, the medallion she had on her neck, tangled up with her arm and the

chain broke. Erminio screamed, "Are you crazy? How do you cross the street like that?" Cazilda responded, "I am sorry Mister". The medallion with the image shined more than ever. Erminio looked to the ground and memories came to his mind, as it did the last time he had seen that medallion on his mother's neck.

Immediately he got out and took his glasses off. He reached out and picked it up from the floor. His hands were shaking. He approached Cazilda and asked her, "Where did you get this medallion?" Cazilda looked at him and said to herself, "That's him, that the truck. This man has my daughter! My God, help me!" Erminio asked her again, "Mister, where did you get this medallion?" Erminio flipped the medallion and on the back had his name and the name of his longing sister that he lost. Cazilda took her hat off and revealed to him that she was no man.

Erminio responded with a surprised face, "You are not a man! Why are you dress as one?" Cazilda told him, "I will tell you where I got this medallion if you tell me where my daughter is." Erminio answered, "Your daughter? What are you talking about? Who is your daughter?" Cazilda said to him, "Mister, my daughter is an innocent young girl with no malice. She is only fifteen years old. My husband sold her to you some weeks ago".

Erminio could see the motherly pain in her face and what Cazilda was capable to do to find her daughter. He asked her what is her daughters name and Cazilda answered, "Her name is Iluminada. Please return her to me. Have mercy". Erminio said to her, "Listen to me very good, I will propose a deal. You tell me how this medallion got into your hands and I promise that I will return your daughter back into your arms".

Cazilda told him that one night, while searching for Iuminada, a young man that was walking with her son, had it and in a struggle, he dropped it. "I picked it up; I also saw that there was an image of the Virgin de la Guadalupe, that's why I kept it". Something got into Erminio, as Cazilda was speaking to him, his fist closed and a light inside him made him understand that he had to return the young girl. His spirit changed inside his soul.

It was that powerful name on the medallion that made him not physically harm Iuminada. To Erminio it was something special. His face changed as soon as he touched the medallion. "Mister", asked Cazilda, "Are you all right?" Erminio only said, "Come, get into my truck, lets go get your daughter. She is all right". Iuminada was serving as a maid in a brothel. When they got to the brothel, Cazilda could not believe that her daughter was alive. Iuminada saw her mother face to face and her reaction made her drop the tray with the drinks.

Cazilda rushed towards Iuminada and hugged her. She said to her lovely daughter, "Bless you o' mighty. You showed mercy upon my Iuminada!" Leaning into her mother's arms, she said, "Mama! I thought that I would never see you again". The joy was imminent. That same moment, Erminio gave the order that he did not want any prostitutes working and sent free all the young girls that by some reason or another got into his brothel.

Apparently, bad steps and lies of a woman her really loved had caused Erminio to feel hate towards women. Hate that he addressed, by being obsessive and humiliating to every women that crossed his path.

Cazilda thanked him. Erminio asked her name, because with all this, she had not revealed her name to him. Cazilda told him her name and Erminio said to her, "If there is any consolation to you, I will let you

know that I will never let any man touch your daughter. There is something about that girl that reminds me of my mother. I ask you and beg you to please forgive me. I probably don't deserve your forgiveness. I have disappointed my own parents". He continued, "My little sister and I were kidnapped by a lady and had us beg for money on the streets. I have not been able to see them and I have not been able to live at peace. All I have done is have revengeful feeling towards women believing that every woman was the same". Cazilda told him, "I am very sorry Mr. I did not know my parents either. I was very little and can't remember much. Only that they were very charming. A good man with a big heart told me that he found me walking with a doll in hand. That is all I remember. At the bottom of my heart, I truly understand your pain".

Erminio, as a strong character, fixed his shirt and told Cazilda, "I carried out my word. Now, let us go with your son so he may tell me how his friend obtained the medallion". It was almost mid-night when Cazilda and Iuminada made it home. Together with Erminio, in search of answers, gave Oscar a great surprise. He happily hugged his sister. Oscar told Iuminada, "Little sister, I love you so much. I was so worried about you". Iuminada saw the bandage that was covering his arm and asked him, "What happened to you?" Cazilda, between both of them, answered, "It was nothing severe. Now, son I have to talk to you. Do you know where the young man that you were walking with got that medallion?" Oscar answered, "Mother, I don't want to talk about it". Cazilda told him, "The man that helped me recover your sister and bring her home is out there and he said the medallion belongs to his mother but that when he was ten years old, he was kidnapped and he has not been able to find his parents. That is why he

needs to know how that young man came to possess the medallion. Tell me son, do you know anything?"

Oscar told her, "Forgive me mother. Tiburon is his name, he stole it from a craft store. An old couple". Cazilda asked him, "Do you know where that store is?" Oscar answered, "Yes, mama". Cazilda asked him to give her directions; in turn, she gave them to Erminio. Then Cazilda told her kids, "I have to talk to you guys". Oscar said to her, "Mama, I'm scared because Pancho and Tiburon hurt that old couple and I don't want anything to happen to me". Cazilda told him, "Don't worry. That man would do no harm to you. Let's change the subject. What I have to say to you is that your father is paralyzed for the rest of his life. He can never walk again. Be patient with him. Even though all what he has done to us, he is still our father. From now on, everything will be different. Let us rest now and tomorrow will be another day and it will be better than the others. Tomorrow your father will be released from the hospital".

The next day, in the morning, the sun was in its entire splendor. The stores were opening; the shoe shiners were already on their working places, the newspaper sellers organizing the papers so they may begin with their route. Artemio's craft store was opening and in a corner, Erminio was observing. It has been thirty years and he said to himself, "My old man. It's him. I finally found you". Artemio went inside and picked up the notebook to write the orders for the day.

Erminio came closer to the storefront window and kept on staring at him. Medallion in hand, he went inside. Artemio asked him, "Mister, what may I help you with?" and between tears, Erminio showed him the medallion. Artemio dropped the notebook and raised his hands to his chest and spoke, "Oh, Almighty One, you brought him back!"

Erminio asked, "Father, is that you? I found you!" Then they hugged

and between tears, Erminio asked about his mother. Artemio said, "Come my son, sit down, so we can talk. Your mother is in delicate health at this time. She suffered an embolism. She is resting at this hour. Come, help me close the store and go home".

At the house, Artemio said to Rosa, "I know that you can hear me. I have a surprise for you. I found our Erminio". For Rosa that was enough to make her get up on her own from the chair where she was sitting and was able to say, "Son, Son". Erminio began to cry and the three hugged. That medallion with the powerful name had performed a miracle.

Rosa, pencil in hand and a paper asked him, "Son, where is your sister? Where did you leave her? What happened that day at the park? How is it you disappeared?" Erminio answered, telling his parents, "A woman with bad intensions took us with her and had us ask for money on the streets. On the third night of us being with her, it was raining and my little sister, Angela disappeared. Since then I have not been able to see her. I have to know about you through the mother of one of the thieves that robbed the store. She had the medallion.

CHAPTER 5

Three years went by. Rosa was saddened to the fact that she could not find her daughter. Iuminada returned to school. Oscar was making a lot of progress in Hogar Crea. The therapy and the support he was getting from his mother and sister gave him the strength that he needed to remain clean. Cazilda always lamented not being able to celebrate Iuminada's fifteenth birthday.

In three years, Mexico had lost a lot of land. Organized crime had taken control of some cities. Among them, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Guerrero, Tijuana and many more. Even though the actual government does not want to recognize it. There is a big problem that within Mexican territory, strangers from Central America are being treated with cruelty and their human rights are violated constantly.

The same crime that Mexico protested in the United States.

There is total terror in Juarez and other places governed by drug traffic. Iuminada, now 18 years old, had her admission into an advanced university program and with a lot of pride, she handed over to her dear mother, who sacrificed everything for her children, the goal of getting into a university. There still one obstacle though. They lived in the bad economical situation. That is why Iuminada wanted to work so she could pay for her needs for the school.

Cazilda knew that her daughter had a big dream, which is why for the past three years, she saved every peso. She wanted to buy the basic things for Iuminada. She promised Cazilda that she would study hard to be a psychologist, which is her dream. Iuminada convinced Cazilda to allow her to work at nights because during the day, she would assist the university. Cazilda, not too convinced, but in the end accepted her.

offer. She knew that her daughter was a good girl and very responsible.

Illuminada, after some days, could find a job as a maid in a hotel. It was not what she really yearned for but the economic situation did not allow her to choose any job. She started working at 8:00pm and would work until 3:00am. Illuminada would barely sleep. She was full of hope and dreams. She sees the light at the end of the tunnel. To Illuminada the most important thing was family unity. It was the biggest fortune and she had presented it in mind that education meant success in the future. Cazilda's weary feeling was the time that Illuminada had to work. Sometimes, Illuminada had to walk because they did not have enough money for public transportation.

It was Monday, the first day at work for Illuminada. She was very excited. Oscar on the same routine. As soon as he came back from school, he would help his father, pushing him around in his wheel chair. He would push him around most of the time to the market, where he would spend the most of the day drawing. Talent that he discovered with the years. With his paintings, he would earn some pesos that helped with the house.

Rosendo was sitting down and in the clouds of his mind when a man approached him and said, "Mister" Rosendo looked at him. To his surprise, Rosendo recognized that face. It was Erminio. The man that he thoughtlessly sold his daughter too. Ermino passed him a one hundred peso bill. Rosendo said, "Thank you, may my Lord pay you back". Rosendo thought in his mind, "He did not recognize me", but Erminio thought, "Poor man, life has passed him the bill".

Artemio was next to Erminio and said to his son, "Go and buy provisions because I want to see these pictures". After some time Erminio returned with the man and Artemio said, "I need you to design

the ceramic because I like your drawings". It was a great opportunity for Rosendo to demonstrate to himself that he was not that mediocre man that he thought he was due to being so poor and a car washer. Rosendo accepted the job with Artemio. He could see in Artemio's eyes that he was a sincere and humbled man.

Days went by and Iluminada was busy with school and work. Oscar was busy with school and before school taking his father to the craft store. Cazilda began to see that Rosendo was changing. The weekend came to fast. Saturday, while everyone was gathered, Rosendo said, "Cazilda, children, I have to talk to you". Cazilda and the kids looked at each other. They have never seen their father pleasant and calmed. Rosendo, with tears in his eyes asked Cazilda for forgiveness for all the damage he had done to her all these years. Cazilda tried to talk but Rosendo told her, "Woman, wait. I am a man of very little words to express myself and it has passed many years before I realized my great mistake. I had to find myself in this chair to realize how valuable this family is". After that he continued, "My children forgive me because of the great damage I did to you. Many times my desire was that you were not born. All these years I have been humiliating and trying to destroy your lives. Without family, there is loneliness, sadness and overall, bitterness. My parents abandoned me at the age of three. I grew up on the street. I would steal to eat and when I turned to a man, I found this saint of a woman, your mother. I ask you to have mercy on me". Those words were enough to tear a piece out of Cazilda and her children's hearts.

Now Cazilda could understand the reason behind Rosendo's abuse, even though it did not justify it, the damage was already done. With teary eyes, Cazilda and her children approached Rosendo and begged him. Out of their lips, "We forgive you". Rosendo promised to go into

therapy because for many years his dreams tormented him. Cazilda told him, "No more tears, I also grew up with no family and who raised me was not my real father. He found me walking on the street at the age of five with a doll in my hand. That's what he told me". Iluminada asked, "Mama is that the doll that is in the room?" Cazilda replied with a modest tone, "Yes, daughter, it is".

Cazilda continued talking, "I don't know if my parents are alive and I will never know. Kids, you were born blessed because for good or bad, you still have Rosendo and me. Starting today, I am sure that there will come a better time because time passes by, years pass by but never love. My great advice is that you never abandon your children, no matter what the adversity is, no matter the storm because we all have the right to be happy. The unhappiness comes from the traditions of el Pueblo and that is vanity. Not having money or in a low social class, you get rejected by the world". After those words, Cazilda told them to get ready because today we will go to the park as a family that we are.

Iluminada entered the room and looked at her mother's doll. She could understand why her mother didn't want it to be taken out of the room. Iluminada carried it and held it to her chest. Cazilda from the kitchen was packing some tacos and beans. She said, "Hurry up kids, it is getting late". Iluminada came down with the doll in her arms. Cazilda looked at her and told her, "Its okay daughter, you can have her". Cazilda and her family headed to the park. The sun was shining. Rosendo was sitting in his wheel chair and Oscar and Iluminada were happy. Two months later, on a Monday, in Hogar Crea, Oscar was serving as a mentor for the youth that came in to the rehab center. Everyday, he was getting busier and busier. He also studies in the school and it was going well.

Rosendo was drawing in the craft store. He was more comfortable there with the help of Artemio. He was happy to have Cazilda and Iluminada around the house and his job. Rosa, with the help of treatment, was making great progress. Everything was working very well for her. To the extent that the doctor said, that Rosa will walk again. She already had moved her legs, arms and could talk again. As for her memory, it was in perfect condition.

It was already seven o'clock at night. Oscar did not return to pick up Rosendo at the craft store like usual. Artemio asked his son Erminio to take Rosendo back home. On their way, Erminio and Rosendo were talking. Erminio said, "How beautiful life is". Rosendo asked, "From which side Mister?" Erminio answered, "From the side of the truth, form the side of doing righteous and not the way we used to live our lives; even though it was in different ways, it was wrong". Rosendo told him, "I can only say that I had to find myself in this wheel chair to realize all the bad I did to my family. I know that I don't deserve their forgiveness but the truth about my family goes above all I've done and their faith in the Morenita in Nuestra Patrona. It is stronger than everyone. I know that my reward is this wheel chair, Mister". Rosendo asked, "Without being offensive, what has been your reward?" Erminio answered, "On the contrary, my biggest gift of this earth was when I got my parents back. I do have some guilt still in my conscious". Rosendo asked, "What is your guilt if I may ask?" Erminio told him, "I had a sister and lost her. I couldn't help her because back then, I was to chavalo and maybe that will be my punishment, never see her again. I grew resentful towards women because of my past and now I want to rectify my mistakes". "How?" asked Rosendo, "The business is spread all over the country. In this country, there are many brothels and thousands of young women that are forced into prostitution. What

you want to do is very difficult. The government does nothing about it". Erminio murmured, "I know what the government can do to avoid men like you and I form continuing to cause harm". Rosendo, facing down, asked, "What can the government do?" "In due time you will know. You will help me too", stated Erminio. He parked in front of the neighborhood where Rosendo lived and helped him out of the truck. Something he had never done with anyone. On the contrary, he was used to being served like a king.

Rosendo, while at home, told Cazilda that Erminio brought him home because Oscar never came to pick him up. Cazilda prepared him some aqua de Jamaica, sat it down and told him, "It could be that Oscar is too busy at the center". While Cazilda was still speaking, Oscar entered the house and said, "Papa, forgive me, I just came from the store and it was closed. I couldn't be there on time because I was presenting a speech to some young men that recently entered the center". Rosendo very calmly said, "Don't worry, I understand, it is part of doing right but since you will be busy, Iluminada can get me". Oscar gave him a big hug and thanked him for his understanding. Rosendo told him, "No son, thank you for your mercy". Cazilda looked at them with her coffee cup in hand and smiled quietly because she knew that peace has arrived finally in her home.

CHAPTER 6

Tuesday morning, during breakfast, Iluminada let them know that she no longer had to work nights because she was able to accommodate her university studies and work in a way that favored her. "I will work from seven in the morning until one o'clock and from two o'clock until seven o'clock at night; I will be in the university". Cazilda said, "That is so good, hija, because I always laid down worried about you". Rosendo congratulated her and asked her, "Hija, could you pick me up at the store because Oscar is presenting a speech until seven o'clock?" Iluminada answered, "Yes, Papa. I will pick you up ten minutes after school. The store is nearby".

Even though years went by and everyone repented, something was missing between those two families. Something that brings them together. Destiny is uncertain sometimes but in many occasions, it is very certain and is written in our paths. Our destiny started to role since the day we were born. Everything has a purpose, a beginning and an end. Drug abuse and prostitution are the principle cause of death.

Wednesday, six in the morning as it was usual, Rosendo was already prepared to begin his routine and Iluminada began to feel butterflies in her stomach. She was turning into a beautiful woman. At the university, she already had an admirer. Rosendo was proud to see that his daughter was already a complete woman, intelligent, happy, and over all humble in a great way. To Rosendo, she was all his pride. As he looked at her, he would silently cry. It was time to go and Iluminada said, "Papa, lets go now, it is getting late". Cazilda was making coffee in the kitchen. Upon seeing her princess arranged with her long hair and her shinny skin, she said to her, "I have to tell you

that even though I was very little and my memory doesn't help me to remember my parents, there is something in you that I can not understand, see or decipher. I just hope that the Almighty, I am not wrong".

Iluminada asked, "What is that you can't remember, Mama?" Cazilda responded, "It is just that at times I see you and I can see my mother's face in you. The way she would look at herself in the mirror. It's the same hair, the same eyes that you have". Iluminada hugged her and said, "Papa, pass me the doll that Mama gave me. It is going to be late. We have to go".

Rosendo arrived at the store. Rosa and Erminio were already there. Rosa was almost fully recovered by now. Rosendo, after greeting Rosa, asked for Erminio and Rosa answered, "My son went out by himself. He told us not to worry, that everything is going to be fine". Rosendo replied, "Rosa, where would you like me to place all of these pictures that are already finished?" "Put them by the corner with the others", answered Rosa.

After Rosendo finished accommodating all the drawings, he started to draw his daughter, Iluminada. That morning he saw her so beautiful and he began to draw her with the doll in her hands. Rosa and Artemio, as usual, took care of the customers with all their love and united in one being.

As for Cazilda at home, her thoughts and memories began to torment her. She kept seeing herself walking on the street and at the same time seeing her mother's face. Each minute that went by it was even more painful for her. It was difficult to get out her tormenting memories. It was imminent that Cazilda was facing her past.

At the end of the day, when it was almost time to close the store, Rosa approached Rosendo and when she noticed what Rosendo had painted,

her heart raced more than usual. Her palpitations grew strong. She began to feel a big pain in her chest. Rosendo, when noticing Rosa, asked her, "Lady, are you okay?" Rosa, with her hand on her chest said to him, "Where did you get that image?" She started to get upset. Rosendo became scared and called Artemio. They both helped her to sit down and Artemio asked her, "Woman, what happened to you? Why are you cold?" Rosendo, with fear, said, "Mister, I believe it was the painting that I made". Artemio asked, "What picture is it?" Rosendo turned and Artemio looked at it, he said, "It is my wife when she was younger. What is the problem?"

Artemio went to the counter and got the pill for Rosa's heart. Once everything calmed down, Rosa asked Rosendo, "How is it that you drew a picture of me if you had never seen me before when I was young? Artemio can you believe it?" Artemio did not get a chance to answer because Rosendo cut in and said, "Rosa, I don't know what is going on but I drew my daughter Iluminada". Rosa and Artemio held hands, looked at each other, and said, "Blessed be the Almighty in Heaven". Artemio said to Rosendo, "It is time to close the store. We have many questions to ask you. How old is your daughter Iluminada?" "Eighteen years old" answered Rosendo. Rosa asked, "And your wife, Cazilda, how old is she?" "A little more than forty", said Rosendo. "How old were you when you met?" continued Rosa. Rosendo answered, "I met her on a rainy day. I approached a phone store to wait for the rain to slow down when she came to do the same and wait for the rain to slow down. She had Manrique with her also". "Who is Manrique, Rosendo?" asked Rosa. Rosendo answered, "It was the man that raised her". "Continue", said Artemio. "Well, after that day, I saw Cazilda again coming from the Mercado. Since I was a car washer, I was always on the street. That day I helped her carry a

stack of yams. That is how I found out where she lived. I began to frequent her, we fell in love and Manrique asked me to marry her before he died. Manrique was a good father to her”.

Rosendo, confused, asked, “What is going on? Why all these questions about my wife?” At the same time, Iluminada walked through the front door of the store. Rosa’s eyes got lost in tears just when she saw her. She was the same image as when she was younger. There was no doubt to Rosa. Iluminada was her granddaughter. Rosa, full of courage was able to manage her urge to hug her and said to her, “Come in Iluminada, come in at once”. Her heart told her what she has not felt in decades. Iluminada asked, “Ms, how is that you know me?”

“Because your father drew you”, Rosa answered and touched her face and her hair.

Destiny sometimes is uncertain but in many occasions it is certain and it is written since before we are born. Our destiny plays everything that has a purpose a beginning and an end.

Iluminada looked at Rosa’s medallion and said, “Look, Papa, she has the same medallion that Mama had”. Rosa thought, “My god, this child is my granddaughter, I have a feeling in my heart”. Artemio thanked the heavens and Rosendo said in his mind, “Something is happening here that I don’t understand”. Artemio and Rosa offered to take them home but Iluminada said, “Thanks but we are close”. Artemio insisted saying, “It doesn’t matter, and tonight we will meet your mother. It seems that she is the only one left to meet. Right old lady?” Rosa said, “Yes, it is, Viejo”.

Artemio said, “Let’s go already, and get in the truck”. Since they entered the vecindad, Rosendo kept on asking, “What is Rosa and Artemio interested in meeting Cazilda?” Iluminada was the first one to enter the house. Cazilda was sitting down, drinking a cup of coffee.

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"Where is your father?" Cazilda asked. Iuminada set her school bag on the top of the table and told her, "Mama, there is someone who wants to meet you". "Who is it? Is it your friend from the university?". "No, Mama", said Iuminada, "It is Rosa and Artemio".

CHAPTER 7

"Enter please", said Rosendo. Cazilda was in front of the two people that gave her life. Something she never would have imagined was to one day is able to find them. To Cazilda's Impression, the only thing she could think of was the day she was taken away from her parents. Her memories began that day when Artemio gave Rosa the medallion. Every second, more thoughts came to her mind and to a bigger surprise; Iluminada took out the doll from her bag.

To Rosa that was the biggest proof. The old couple was exposed when the cry of joy began. Cazilda was able to react and say, "Senora, please sit down, may I offer you something to drink?" Rosendo observed from his wheel chair. "We are leaving but maybe another day we will accept a cup of coffee very gratefully because this is not the last time we will see each other".

Cazilda asked Rosendo to accompany them to the main gate at the vecindad. While they walked towards the exit, Rosendo asked, "Mister, do you think Cazilda may be you missing child?" Artemio asked, "How do you know that we have a missing daughter?" Rosendo replied, "Your son, Erminio, suffers because he lost his sister. He himself told me. That is his pain and frustration and it seems my wife is your daughter". Rosa said, "Rosendo, because the love of a mother who is the one who gave birth to a child is the greatest feeling. What brings two hearts into one?" "I understand", said Rosendo. "We are going to ask you for a favor Rosendo, please, do not tell our daughter that we are her parents. We will look for the right moment because Cazilda could reject us. She might think that we abandoned her. She probably doesn't remember what happened".

For a long time Cazilda has been having bad dreams at night as she slept and in my conscience, I couldn't understand her suffering because of my behavior she never told me anything. Now I understand many things. It could be that her mind is blocked.

Rosendo asked, "In my opinion, I believe it would be best if you guys take Cazilda to a psychologist and together tell her the truth". Rosa said, "But for that, my son would have to be present and he left his phone at home. There is no way to communicate with him".

Days went by and the time of coming together the two families came closer and closer. Erminio did not come back until days later. Receiving the good news from his father that his sister reappeared. It gave him some mixed emotions. He felt guilt for not being able to protect his sister. He only asked where she is. Who is it? He wanted to see her. Rosa calmed him down and told him, "Calm down, son, who you least thin it is, that is your sister and we all will go to therapy together. So make your suitcase first before I tell you who she is, tell me where you and why did you leave?" Erminio, impatiently said, "Mama, tell me who my sister is and I will tell you what I have been doing and the reason of my departure". "Okay" answered Rosa, "Your sister is Cazilda, Rosendo's wife. The same man that you know". "What! I can't believe it, one time she commented me that she didn't have a father but I never thought that she was my sister. Mother, how did you find out?" "Son, it is a long story" his parents said, "The only thing that we can tell you is that she does not know yet. We are afraid that she may reject us and we were waiting for you so we could go to therapy together. That we could tell her the truth" "When would we go to therapy? When will it be?"

To Erminio, it was a bitter truth because he had cause harm to his own niece. "Papa, I was very busy collecting signatures so I could send to

the Mexican congress and the United Nations in America. There may be a law that prohibits young women to serve at nightclubs or brothels. That would deal a good blow to the prostitution and to any other dating house that has young girls even though it might be on their own will, might be sanctioned, because I know very well how that business is ran. That is what I want to accomplish. There are many people that are and will be in agreement if this project is broadcasted. They would have to be conscience that from prostitution people can make it to the drugs and from the drugs to the Blanca business and organ traffic. If every country had a special department that is exclusive in drugs, prostitution and organ traffic, there will not be as much aids disease, death would be reduced in the ninety percent. Even better, there would be more knowledge. This is my goal".

Rosa and Artemio felt proud of there son while listening to him. Even though Rosa and Artemio were humbled people and with good hearts, everyday their interest for Cazilda and her family became more and more obvious. Cazilda in many occasions, asked Rosendo, "Why is Rosa buying clothes for my children and is always so interested in me? Is because you are doing a good job and are bringing in lots of money to the store? Because there are no other explanations, from that night we meet, that lady is interested in everything we do".

Rosendo had his mouth sealed because of the promise he made. He got nervous and Cazilda, spending so many years with him, was able to recognize every detail about Rosendo. The day of the appointment arrived with the psychologist and Rosendo was in charge of bringing Cazilda. Rosendo, with patience and love told Cazilda, "I would like for us to go to a psychologist", she answered, "Why do we have to go?" "That we may take couples therapy because I don't want to relapse and fall into old habits", Rosendo answered. Cazilda looked at him and

told him, "If that is what you want, it is okay with me. When would that be?" "That day is today. I have the appointment already made. I know that you wouldn't deny me something like that".

Rosa and Artemio were already at the hospital by the time Rosendo and Cazilda arrived. Rosendo immediately commented by saying, "My love, look who is here?" Cazilda greeted them and sat down to talk with them. "Your father was a great man, Cazilda", said Rosa, "You are a good woman, even though you did not grow up with your mother, you had a great education". "How do you know that I don't have a mother?" she looked at Rosendo. Rosa said, "Please, don't be upset. I know that is very private to you but you must get everything out of your mind". "It is clear my husband feels very comfortable talking with you", said Cazilda.

The moment arrived, the psychologist approached Rosa and asked her, "Lady, are you guys ready?" "Of course", answered Artemio. When Cazilda found herself alone with Rosendo, she began to scorch him. "Why did you tell Rosa so many private things about me? I told you that I don't want to talk about my parents since they abandoned me when I was only a five-year-old child. Do you understand that? That is why I don't want to remember".

Rosendo told her, "I have a question and I want you to answer me with your heart". "Ask me!" said Cazilda. "How do you know your parents abandoned you?" asked Rosendo. Cazilda was confused for a moment and could not find a way to answer. Rosendo insisted and told her, "I have made many mistakes in my life and it has been hard and very difficult for me to get rid of some memories. I would like to give you a piece of advice. If your parents reappear, you must give them the opportunity to explain what happened. Since you yourself don't even remember what happened, why judge them without knowing? I

brought you here so you may face your past and be happy. Maybe all the misunderstanding I put you through has caused you to block your mind. I ask you, I beg of you, that when you enter the room with the psychologist, you are going to see someone that is from your past, promise me that you will listen to the doctor and that you will take the therapy".

Cazilda began to cry after Rosendo's words. Those words touched her very deeply. She only answered, "Okay, I will do as the doctor says", she gave Rosendo a kiss on his hands. The doctor came out of the office and looked at Rosendo, with a stern look; the doctor understood that he had convinced her. "Calm down", said the doctor, "Everything is going to be alright. I'll give you my word". When the doctor opened the door, Cazilda got scared and the doctor said, "Sit down because this couple you already know are a part of your past".

Rosa grabbed Cazilda's hands. The doctor said, "Mister, you may step out for a moment". Once they were all alone, the doctor began to give her some instructions. "Please, close your eyes, relax as best as you can. You will go into a deep sleep and I will ask you some questions. First, Cazilda, how old are you?" "Five", said Cazilda. "Where are you?" "I don't know, there are many trees and lots of birds". "Who is with you?" "My brother, my doll and my parents". "Can you see your parents real well?". "Yes". "What else can you see?" "My brother is running in the woods". "And your parents, where are they?" "They are bathing in the river, no! Who are you? Let go of my brother!" "Who is grabbing your brother?" "A woman and a young man. Let me go! Mama, Mama! I can't see any more. I'm very scared". "It is okay, Angela. Calm down". "Rosa, what do you feel?". "Lots of pain and my children are gone. Artemio where are my children? I can't see them, it

can't be!". "Rosa, on the count of three, you will wake up. One, two,three!"

The doctor told Cazilda, "This lady is your mother and he is your father. They never abandoned you. You and your brother were kidnapped and your name is Angela. I know it must have been very difficult for you to carry all the suffering but the truth is here, next to you. Please, let Artemio come in. you people have many things to say to each other and is never too late to be reunited with your loved ones. I will be outside for what ever you need".

"Thank you doctor", said Rosa. Cazilda hugged her father and told him, "Forgive me because I have always thought you guys abandoned me and I refused to remember". "It does not matter", said Artemio, "You are our daughter and we love you. Let us go, we have to talk with our grandchildren". "Hija,", said Rosa, "Your husband knew and he was helping us so this could happen. He feels guilty for what happened in the past, please don't be hard on him". "No, Mama, now I understand many things. Let us go now because we have to talk to everyone, like a family".

When they came out of the office, Erminio and Rosendo were waiting for the results. Cazilda said, "Little brother, I love you so much!" and they hugged and cried together. They all went to Cazilda's house. They reunited and the first one to say thanks was Artemio and these were his words, "I never lost the hope of finding my two children and my guilt did not know what really happened that day. Where did I go wrong? What did I do wrong to deserve that pain that ate me up inside? In addition, I have to confess something. It was this woman courage that kept me standing because there were moments that I thought of not being alive but today I have the satisfaction of having

everyone. Even though I'm old, I can die in peace. I will always give thanks to the heavens for there mercy".

Everyone, upon hearing those words, cried very emotionally. "I am not this grumpy old lady. I used to wake up and before anything, I would open there bedroom doors, because in my conscience, I used to think that one day I would find them sleeping and to my disappointment, I felt it was not me who woke up but it was my spirit. I am sure that every Mexican mother's feelings, whom their children had been taken away". After finishing her words, she hugged all of her children.

"As for me", Rosendo said, "Even though I am confined to this wheel chair, I am very proud of all of you. Everyone had conquered adversity and for one or more reasons, life has rewarded you according to you deeds. Look ate me, as I told Erminio, this is the reward for my deeds. I've learned that I have to accept reality. I give thanks for considering me as a part of your family". "Children", Cazilda said, "Do you have something to say?". They both answered, "We just want to say that we love you all very much!"

Erminio added, "Family, I, the same as Rosendo, caused harm to you. I caused harm to other families. With dirty money, I bought you women for the prostitution. When I saw a father of a family, so desperate for money, sell his daughter. I had no remorse. I always had that rancor that I had since I was ten years old. A bad woman stole my childhood and even worse, my family. I was bitter with every woman but one young girl came to my life and made me change. I don't know what happened but that young girl gave me a very confusing feeling. It was the blood calling. That's why, today, I want to continuing fighting so the governments may not allow any night clubs or brothels to have young women serving any type of beverage. That is the code of the prostitution and the drug addiction. Forgive me, I've

been thinking and analyzing this entire odyssey and it is like a horror movie. How big destiny plays in our lives. My sister and I, by misfortune, were taken away from our parents and many things had to happen to be here today. Even though divine justice takes time, it marks its time and its hour and they are perfect. Rosendo's ignorance is why we are here today, together. Because of Rosendo's behavior, this gathering began. One day, Oscar, left the house and never came back and where he thought it was the best shelter, it was a house of drug addicts. Already being there, his two friends, one called Pancho and the other, Tiburon, convinced him to go out and steal. What do you know? Where they went to steal was the same store where my parents were, where Guadalupana was present. Then, Rosendo in his desperation, sold his daughter". Cazilda jumped in and said, "To my own brother who was walking in darkness, because they stole my mother's medallion, my brother Erminio came back to my life and thanks to the picture of Rosendo's, everyone started a new life. Today, it is more than clear to me that hate and rancor harm the soul and it poisons it. Knowing how to forgive is the essence of peace and faith".