

## Chapter IX

*My mind expands and shrinks all the time...*



After having tried for many years to get it, some doctors and I could rent a two-storey-small house and set up a poly-surgery.

To be my own boss and practise the medicine I want; to assist people "gratis" without having to ask permission to anybody. And besides I had received my first wages after three months of assisting Social Medical Insurance.

This extra money would be useful to buy luxurious things to my home. A fan, an automatic washing machine, a new lock to my bathroom and even to throw away the old and torn davenport.

As a patient hadn't come I left my surgery and went to talk to Elizabeth, my secretary. In the street, through the pane of the front door I watch two men coming boldly towards us. A third one remains waiting outside on a motto.

- "Keep quiet or we'll shoot. Don't touch anything".

A short - haired and black-eyed one shouts the orders. He takes my money out of my pocket. Two thousand pesos. He counts them and tells the other to search me "thoroughly". While the second one is obeying, he takes three hundred pesos from the bunch and puts them into his own pocket. (He, who steals a thief, one hundred years forgiveness!!!!)

The other man searches every pocket, even my waist. He doesn't find anything. He puts his gun on my neck and pushes my jaw up. The cold metal mumbs me. I only keep my hands up.

- "You've got more money, give me all your money or I'll kill you".

He's a fattish youth, who's got his eye-pupils quite widen, palefaced and uneasy; his pulse shakes, he speaks threatening, and seems to be quite sure of himself. He pours out his fiery hate that emits through his eyes.

(He's overdosed of coca or amphetamines) I think inwardly.

He breathes on my face and I smell sour alcoholic fumes. The mixture of alcohol and coca is very dangerous and he may behave unpredictably.

My mind expands and shrinks all the time. Bitterness and fury to be such a defenceless victim. I've got a desperate wish they may take everything and go away.

I wonder if it's a dreadful dream or a cruel nightmare. Prisoner, each one of my movements are controlled, quite lonely and extremely unprotected.

The unlimited power they have over my life, causes me giddiness and nausea. The other one threads the secretary with his gun and says:

- "Give me the "cash", where's the big money?"
- "They took it away", she answers.

There's very little money. Elizabeth is crying. Desperately, the thief opens the cashbox, and takes everything, even the small coins.

- "Lay down on the floor, bitch. One of them suggests to go upstairs where there are more people.

The drugged fat boy walks back a few steps and wants to kill her . She cries begging for her children not to do it.

In a moment of hesitation, while the thieves are arguing I look at the toilet door, and without thinking, I rush from behind Elizabeth, open the door and at the same time I grab her by the arm and protecting her with my body I push her inside.

I think they're going to shoot me. In less than three seconds, my brain, working at high speed, imagines the bullet drilling my kidney, while I'm wondering what surgeon is on guard at the hospital.

But, unbelievably, the bullet didn't come out and we remained sheltered in the square metre small toilet. They spare my life and only switch the light off from outside. I manage with the light of the ophthalmoscope.

Later they push in two women (a very fat one) and an old man. A sharp noise is heard, similar to a shot. They quarrel among themselves.

- "You wounded him idiotic fatso. I told you not to touch anybody".

They push in a staggering man and close the door again, warning us not to open it for an hour. He's the doctor who worked on the upper floor. He touches his head and faints. With the light of the ophthalmoscope. I can see a bullet wound at the back of his head. I sit him down on the loo, and horrified I find he has one eyes-pupil larger than the other and he's gasping.

We are six persons squeezed in a small square meter. I intend to go out, but they stop me. Fear and terror are overwhelming us.

I have no alternative, I insert my little finger into the bullet hole. When I pull it out, lots of blood springs up and in a few minutes his eye-pupils and breathing are normal.

I insist in going out, and again they stop me. We discuss it and from the cellular phone of one of the women, they let me phone the police.

I dial the three numbers of Emergency, but the answer is that it has only jurisdiction on Capital Federal; they don't know the number of Independencia District, and they can't contact them; that I'm out of the city and I must call Information... He's bleeding abundantly.

Miraculously, I remember the number of Emergency for cellular phones. I call and an advertising message answers: "Cellular Telephony announces its promotion of two free

cinema tickets for your already paid bill. For further information call 0-800-0 or enter in our page; [www.celulares.com](http://www.celulares.com)"

I can't feel his radial pulse.

"Welcome to our Emergency System: dial the needed number: Police 01; Ambulances 02; Fire Brigade 03; Gas leakage in the street 04; Gas leakage at home 05; Devastation 06.....others 07". His heart beating can't be heard. I dial the number and it goes on: "Federal District 01; Environs 02; Villa Hermosa 03; La Salada 04; Laguna Grande 09; I begin massaging his chest. I dial 02; of the environs: "The Trebol 01; La guardia 02; Independencia 07; Fleming 08". I blow air into his lungs. I dial 07 and they are playing the music of Beethoven's Sonata "Claire de Lune".

Massage and revival.

The communication is interrupted and I'm furious. I'm tired of the horror, the inefficiency and the awful anguish on this side of the door and the selfish and murderous madness on the other side.

I go out ready to fight with my own fists. I don't care anything. Let it be God's will. Head or tail.

Everything is quiet and empty. An emptiness that it's felt and hurts even in the bones. The owners of life and death have already gone.

The drama of living, of trusting, of loving just starts once again.