

Chapter 1

The University Student

Carmen Báez was the last student to leave the Madrid University library that evening. Her studies in pharmacy were getting more difficult, but as a third-year student, she was able to visualize the end of her studies in another year, maybe a year-and-a-half, and then a comfortable income in her future employment. She knew every back street to her apartment, which she shared with three other students, and was anxious to get home to continue her studying. She hadn't eaten dinner yet. It wasn't her night to prepare dinner; and, she knew, according to the agreement among the roommates, that whoever had cooked dinner that evening had left her a plate to be heated up in the microwave. With a major test tomorrow, it would be a long night.

As she turned down the last alleyway, a block and a half from the apartment, she realized the streetlight, which usually made this part of her journey home as bright as a sunny afternoon, wasn't lit tonight. Oh well, such is life. That lamp had been flickering off and on for the last three weeks. Evidently, it had finally stopped working. Must have been the bulb she thought. They'd have to call it in to the civil authorities or it would be years before it would be fixed.

She had looked up at the streetlight, but as her gaze came down, she was being approached by a man who was all bent over and clutching his left leg as though he were in considerable pain. As he came closer, he asked her about the directions to the nearest hospital stating that a dog had bitten him, and he needed some medical attention. As if on cue, a dog barked in the distance. Carmen, wanting to be helpful, dropped her book bag and walked up close to the man to give him specific directions when he grabbed her. With one hand over her mouth and another around her waist, he pulled her into the deepest and darkest part of the alleyway behind the neighborhood recycling and trash bins.

As she struggled, the man told her that he wouldn't hurt her if she stopped struggling. She did, and he jammed a huge rag into her mouth to prevent her from screaming. Holding her arms behind her back, he pulled her skirt up and panties off. She kept struggling, but she was less than 1.5 meters (4'11") tall and weighed only 43 kilos. Her attacker on the other hand was 2 meters (6'7") and 115 kilos. She had no chance to prevent him from spreading her legs and raping her. She glanced down as he tried to enter her and realized that he was wearing a condom. At least she wouldn't get pregnant, but that didn't help her much. His attack was vicious but didn't last long.

As he finished and was still leaning over, her instinct for survival was strong enough that, even though she was lying down, she doubled her body up and kicked him twice, once in his face and once in his midsection. He uttered a curse and, throwing his whole weight behind his effort, he bodily picked her up and threw her against the stucco and stone wall of the nearest building. There was a sharp crack as her skull was shattered and her neck was broken.

He didn't even wonder how badly she was hurt. He was still too angry. He really didn't

even care. He walked over to where she lay, quickly grabbed the rag from her mouth and used it to wrap up the filled condom and his rubber gloves, making a nice ball of waste. As he warned himself that he'd better get away as soon as possible, he attended to himself, straightened his coat, and looked around to see if anyone was nearby or if anyone was coming to see what was happening. Seeing no one, he quickly walked down the alleyway in the direction that the woman had entered from the nearest street. Two blocks later he deposited his rag- wrapped package in a dumpster. After another couple of streets, he moved into another dark alleyway, removed his mask, and stuffed it into his coat pocket.

Why had he lost his temper? He really hadn't intended on hurting her. He only wanted to get rid of "the urge". He had hoped that maybe he would feel better if he could just have sex. Usually in the past he had courted women who willingly coupled with him, but he hadn't had anyone for several weeks. He hadn't felt that sense of belonging. And while he hadn't really cared for the women whom he dated, sex made him feel loved, accepted, and wanted - all the things he hadn't felt his entire lifetime.

"The urge" had become so strong in the last few days that when he had seen this girl, he knew he had to have her. He had followed her at a distance several evenings when she had left the library. He knew she walked these streets alone and would be easy to approach. He had noticed the streetlight flickering and going out the previous night and realized that the gods were smiling on him. Tonight, he had checked and, sure enough, the streetlight hadn't come on, so he waited for her approach.

He'd waited in the darkest shadows until she had almost come upon him. It was fortuitous that she had been distracted by the light being off. He could get close to her without being seen. And, asking directions and pretending to be bitten by a dog, while being a last-minute idea, had worked very well. He laughed when he thought of the dog barking in the distance. Now he had to hurry home and take a hot shower. As he walked, he thought that if she were to be discovered, there wasn't a chance that he would ever be blamed for her being raped. He had taken every precaution. Good!

Unfortunately, lying in the alleyway behind him, with a fractured skull and broken neck, was a university student who had not only been raped, but had been killed.

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