



“Dan-el, the police just searched our apartment for drugs!”

I took Mom’s call outside my school’s computer room, where I’d been proofreading the school newspaper.

“What? What happened? Why did they think we had drugs? Did they say?”

“Mi’jo, it’s going to be OK now. They made a big mistake. They had one cop who speaks a little Spanish explain to me what went wrong. They’d received a call from someone who told them dealers were storing drugs in an apartment in our building. The cops thought the informant said ‘Apartment 2B,’ so they came to our apartment—”

“So they were there when you got home from church?”

“They’d knocked down the door. They were searching everything. They searched my bedroom, the table where I have the candles for the santos, the living room, the

kitchen, the bedrooms.”

“Do they still think we’re involved with drug dealers?”

“Ay, no, mi’jo. So they’re searching everywhere and I’m telling them over and over again that they’re wrong, that we’re a family of God and I’m just a single mother raising two children. I showed them all your books, I told them you go to a famous private school on full scholarship. But they wouldn’t believe anything I told them. They just kept asking where the drugs were. But finally, finally, thank you, Virgin Mary, one of the police officers took out his radio and spoke with the police officers standing outside our building. That’s when another cop came up to me and said they were extremely sorry. That it had all been a mistake, that they were supposed to be investigating another apartment instead. And you should have seen them, Dan-el, how nice they were when they realized their mistake. They’re even going to pay to have our door fixed.”

“Those sinvergüenza cops!”

“Dan-el! They were doing their job, my son. It’s over now.”

“Did they ask about our immigration status?”

“Thank God no, my son. They didn’t ask me for papeles or anything like that.”

I let out a small sigh of relief. Mom continued:

“But I must have interrupted you, my son, you’re still at school working on the newspaper, right? Everything’s OK, I just wanted you to know what had happened. Get back to what you were doing and I’ll see you at home for dinner. Dios te bendiga.”

I returned to the computer room. One of my friends asked me if anything was wrong.

“Me?” I replied. “Nah, kid, I’m good.”

Copyright © 2015 by Dan-el Padilla Peralta. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.