

Introduction

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This support pack contains the following materials:

- the story that you can listen to in the podcast
- a vocabulary activity based on the story.

Read the story

The Masterpiece

by Carmen María Ugarteche Soriano

“The day was cloudy enough to feel blue, as if today the sun had chosen not to stay in the fearful sky. He had escaped from the big monsters of guilt, but still it would come up one day, for pay back time, when nothing would stop it from shining like a god in the right place and at the right time.

This is what you think and what you become, when you taste the power that you have in others. It's quite simple actually, when someone fears you, you're in such a privileged position, you can almost play with your victims, like little toys that you can move and scare. They don't realize it, they just let it happen. That's why I'm the big guy and they are the smallest, meaningless people that think I will be always undefeatable.

I'm telling you, if you really want to kill somebody, don't put a bullet in his head, put one in his mind, his morality, his principles, then you'll have him, without suffering, without the dramatic part, it will be just you and him, with his and your own demons. And then you'll be able to enjoy the part when the agony will take place, and then you'll have to face and challenge your victim to do something to help himself. And it gets even better, as he realizes there's no way out, he gives up and surrenders to be killed, almost as if he was begging you to do so. Isn't life great!

My name is Mathew Novak. I like to see myself as an artist and because of that, I'm a tremendous fan of people that aren't afraid to see themselves as kings and queens of their lives and even of the world. These kings and queens are the kind of people that are always ready to face anything that may come, because they know

what they want to get from life. They aren't corrupted with addictions, physically and mentally speaking, because they go beyond that. They realize that's just a way of controlling people. And as they can see that, they're always one step ahead of the rest of the people.

Therefore, I cannot accept competitors. And don't get me wrong here, I admire these guys, but I just cannot allow them to keep taking advantage of this precious knowledge, without sharing it. As you see I'm a humanitarian. The way I see it, getting rid of these guys, would be the best thing we could do for society.

My style is neat, classic and controversial. I like to watch my victims as they hurt themselves. Oh, I'm sorry, I haven't told you yet: first, I choose them very carefully, not everybody has all the qualities that are required to commit a “perfect” crime. Once I have the right person, it really doesn't matter if it is a woman or a man, I trick him or her, and just before killing him, I take him to an art Museum, before a big opening is starting. In that way my “art” is also exhibited to the whole world as an amazing masterpiece, my masterpiece.

But, as you seem so interested in my work, I've decided to document my next murder. So you'll experience for the first time in your life, what it feels to be in my shoes, and to have the last look of your victim on your mind for the rest of your life. Fasten your seat belts, this will be fun.

Her name is Angela Potter, she's the kind of woman that wakes up in the morning and exercises on her running machine until her body can't go on anymore. The same thing happens in her office, she always pushes everything to the

limits and that's how she manipulates her business in order to be the best in the company. She's the one in charge of convincing investment clients to become rich and successful with her and her lucrative institution. As you see, she knows exactly what she's doing. And she's an unstoppable killing machine of people that are described by her as "sheep".

The next step to follow is to get to know the victim, how she works, where she takes breaks and of course, if she's interested in "human art". So I will go to the cafeteria to get a cup of coffee, and then I'll establish the first communication. Now let's stop here one moment, it's very important to make a good impression, in that way she will come to you, instead of you to her.

Just as I thought, she likes the mysterious type of men, dressed completely in black and of course with an elegant style. The age didn't matter so much, so I had the perfect opportunity. I first started the conversation with a simple question: "Do you enjoy art?". And as a response I got a perfect answer: "Yes, especially Goya's paintings. I simply love the way he expresses human suffering" - said Angela.

Are you feeling the excitement already? Every thing is perfect, if this keeps going so fast, you'll lose the enchanting part of the conquest. Angela was really pleased with my presence in her world, therefore, the time for executing her was close. As I hold her in my arms I start to examine her body closely, so I could pick the most sufficient weapon to end her life. She's a tall, slim woman, so she wouldn't offer much resistance.

I had chosen my weapon. Even though she had a horrible soul, she also had a beautiful face, so I've decided to remove it with a really sharp scalpel and with some other deadly knives, and then I'll make a tri-dimensional picture with her dreadful skin. That would really express the "human suffering" she was talking about. It's perfect, each and every part of her was useful for me. This will surely be my masterpiece.

I spoke with Angela this morning, she has to meet me in the art museum at eight o'clock. I've arranged everything, I have a spare key for the museum, and as I've studied the security system of the whole building, I'll have it open when she arrives for our meeting.

Now comes the sublime part of a murder, pay attention. As soon as she gets there, she can't be suspicious, at all; what's more, she has to be comfortable with the situation, and then you have to little by little start to get into her mind, play with it for a while, tell her that you love her, but you can't resist her superiority complex of wanting to have everything under control. After that, the humiliation part begins. You must make her feel insignificant, guilty, open the doors of her deepest fears and let them take over her. Then you'll have her in your hands.

Once I got there, I was impatient, I hate unpunctual people, I hate it so much, "but easy" - I told myself, I can't lose control now, it's about to happen. Everything is ready, she hasn't arrived yet, and I had been waiting for her over an hour. But, suddenly a cab stopped in front of me. It was her, Angela. She looked pale, insecure, but nothing that I could do would reveal my secret plan. I had taken care of all the details.

She came out of the car, dressed all in black, just like I was. She had this big carmine smile, and she came towards me to say hi. I carry on with the plan. I took her inside the museum, and I made her comfortable. Then we started to talk, I began by saying "I love you but,..." and she just looked at me, with deep hate. I saw a glimpse of anger in her eyes, this was unexpected, and suddenly she pulled out her demons without me calling them. Then she began by asking me: "I once told you, I enjoyed human suffering, didn't I?" I felt a cold stab in my heart when I heard those chilling words coming out of her mouth. What was she doing? Wasn't she afraid? Where were her monsters of guilt? By then I could only see mine, eating me alive, consuming me. My frightened eyes were now on her mind, she had convinced me of what I had become, another sheep that had been manipulated by the queen of the kings. She was now the sun and I was the guilty shadow of a cloudy soul. I could not see so clear now, I was about to be killed, and without even knowing it, I was giving up, as if I had no way out. And I knew exactly what was going to happen. This is so ironic, I cannot even begin to understand it, I was going to be killed by my perfect victim, not Angela, but my own frustrated dreams and revenges of a society that won't understand my meaningless life ever.

Well, I'm the one ending this crime, by assassinating the killer with his own twisted thoughts. The only thing I can tell you is what appeared in the next day's newspaper: "A man

has been found at the state museum, skinless and hung out like a portrait with an inscription on the wall, that said: this was my master piece....".

After reading

Exercise 1

Find words in the text that mean the same as the words and expressions listed below. There is one word from each paragraph and they appear in the correct order, i.e. 1. is from the first paragraph, 2. from the second paragraph, etc.

1	The feeling of shame that you feel when you have done something wrong	
2	Having special favoured status	
3	Principles of right and wrong	
4	Dependences	
5	A person devoted to promoting the welfare of all people	
6	Contentious	
7	To gather and report the details of	
8	Profitable	
9	An effect produced on a person	
10	The bearing of pain or distress	
11	The act of opposing or withstanding something	
12	A small knife used by surgeons	
13	Not in regular use or immediately needed	
14	Inspiring admiration through beauty, etc.	
15	Not on time	
16	Unforeseen	
17	Strange and slightly unpleasant or cruel	

Answers

Exercise 1: 1. *guilt*; 2. *privileged*; 3. *morality*; 4. *addictions*; 5. *humanitarian*; 6. *controversial*; 7. *document*; 8. *lucrative*; 9. *impression*; 10. *suffering*; 11. *resistance*; 12. *scalpel*; 13. *spare*; 14. *sublime*; 15. *unpunctual*; 16. *unexpected*; 17. *twisted*