

LIMITED CAPACITY

***LIMITED CAPACITY***

***by TOMAS URTUSASTEGUI***

## LIMITED CAPACITY

### **SET DESIGN.**

*A small elevator from the 50's in an apartment building in Colonia del Valle, México City.*

*It can fit six people and measures 2.50 Mts. in height, by 1 Mt. width and 1.50 in length.*

*The metal door functions automatically the buttons on the panel. A small sign posted on the wall explains that maximum capacity is for six people. On the ceiling there is a metal tramp. The elevator should be built of metal to give a feeling of weight and closeness.*

### **COSTUMES.**

*Alma and Fernando wear modern denim outfits and running shoes. Cecilia is in a very provocative dress. Francisca is dressed in a dark two-pieces outfit and wears loafers. Virginia's outfit is plain and sober. Ramon wears gray suit with a blue sweater. Amparo, the maid, wears simple but provocative clothes. Miguel is wearing his school uniform.*

### **TIME.**

*The present.*

*The action begins as the elevator is going down. Due to a power failure stops about 30 CMS. above the stage floor. In the event mechanical move is not possible, action should begin in the dark. A noise is heard coming from the elevator. A brief pause as they wait.*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- What happened?

FRANCISCA.- Power's out again. That's the second time today.

RAMON.- Press all the buttons. One of them should work.

FERNANDO.- Can't see a thing.

MIGUEL.- *FRIGHTENED*. Grand!

VIRGINIA.- I'm here. Don't move.

*CECILIA FLICKS A LIGHTER. SHE TRIES TO LIGHT THE WHOLE SPACE.*

FERNANDO.- *ASKING FOR THE LIGHTER*. Let me have it, please. *HE TAKES IT, IT GOES OUT, HE FLICKS IT ON AGAIN, CROSSES OVER TO THE CONTROL PANEL*. Excuse me, excuse me.

VIRGINIA.-Be careful! You stepped on me!

FERNANDO.- Sorry.

VIRGINIA.- Quite obviously it wasn't your foot.

FERNANDO.-*PUSHING THE BUTTONS*. Not working.

MIGUEL.- Are we gonna stay here?

VIRGINIA.- Of course not.

ALMA.- Have you already tried the alarm button?

FERNANDO.- Which alarm? I can't see. Give me a light.

ALMA.- Press it!

FERNANDO.- I'd rather press you.

ALMA.-*LAUGHING*. Stop that!

FERNANDO.- All right already.

FRANCISCA.- Young man, you are in the presence of a minor.

FERNANDO.- Ahh!

CECILIA.- I'm already late.

AMPARO.- I left my baby alone.

RAMON.- *BANGING ON THE DOOR*. Open up!

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FRANCISCA.- You scared me.

MIGUEL. I want get out.

VIRGINIA.- We all want to get out, you're not the only one.

*THE LIGHTS SUDDENLY COME ON AGAIN. THERE'S A MURMUR OF GENERAL SATISFACTION. THERE ARE ALL FACING THE DOOR. ASIDE FROM THE ACTORS, THERE IS ALSO A GROCEY CART WHICH IS FULL AND CONTAINS FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND OTHER GROCERIES. EACH OF THE CHARACTERS CARRIES A DIFFERENT PERSONAL PROP, I.E. A BRIEFCASE, A BACKPACK, NEWSPAPERS, HANDBAGS, SHOPPING BAG, SPORTS BAG, ETC.*

VIRGINIA.- Thank goodness.

FRANCISCA.- That didn't last very long. *TO FERNANDO.* Could you press number four, please.

FERNANDO.- I've already pressed them all. *SMILES.* We'll let destiny decide which floor to take us to.

MIGUEL.- It's not moving.

FERNANDO.- It must be warming up, like a car.

ALMA.- Quit clowning.

FERNANDO.- I have a feeling they only turned the generator on, that's why this mother's not working.

ALMA.- What generator?

FERNANDO.- Don't tell me you don't have a power generator in this dump? Next time don't bother asking me up.

ALMA.- *LAUGHING.* You should be grateful we at least have an elevator.

VIRGINIA.- Please, could you have this conversation later?

AMPARO.- Is it really not opening? I left a pot on the stove.

FRANCISCA.- Before you said you'd left your child.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

AMPARO.- I did, but I left him in my bedroom.

CECILIA.- How old is he?

AMPARO.- Nine months.

*FRANCISCA GIVES HER A DISAPPROVING LOOK*

RAMON.-*COUGHS DISCREETLY.* Excuse me. Allow me to try pressing the buttons.

FERNANDO.- I already pressed them again.

RAMON.-*CROSSING TO THE PANEL.* Excuse me...

FERNANDO.-*GIVING HIM ROOM.* Wow, maybe he has bionic fingers.

*HE, ALMA AND THE BOY LAUGH. THE BOY'S GRANDMOTHER SMACKS HIM LIGHTLY.*

RAMON.- Excuse me.

*RAMON IS NOW FACING THE PANEL AND PRESSES ONE OF THE BUTTONS. WHEN THERE IS NO ACTION, HE IMPATIENTLY TRIES AGAIN. HE BANGS ON THE DOOR.*

FERNANDO.- *MOCKINGLY.* See, now you've screwed it up.

RAMON.-*BANGING AGAIN ON THE DOOR.* It's impossible. *HE HAS A COUGHING FIT.* A person could die and nobody gives a darn.

CECILIA.- Why isn't it moving?

FERNANDO.- Well, you see, it's just like that Cucaracha-won't move without a hit.

ALMA.- *SINGING AND PRETENDING TO SMOKE..." marihuana que fumar"*

FRANCISCA.- It the power is back on there's no reason why it shouldn't be working.

VIRGINIA.- Everything in this building is a mess. People do whatever they please, the janitor is never around, the stairs are filthy. You'd think that the least you could expect when you pay the rent promptly is minimum maintenance service...never mind anything better. That would be asking for the moon.

*LONG PAUSE. THE WATCH'EACH OTHER. THEY SHIFT AND SETTLE AGAIN. ALMA TURNS ON HER TRANSISTOR RADIO. SHE HUMS TO THE MUSIC.*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*THE OTHERS, EXCEPT THE YOUNG MAN AND THE CHILD, STARE AT HER MEANINGFULLY.*

VIRGINIA.- If you wouldn't mind, could you please turn the radio off?

*ALMA PAYS NO ATTENTION. NOW SHE HUMS LOUDER. FERNANDO SWAYS TO THE MUSIC.*

CECILIA.- *NERVOUS BUT KEEPING HER CALM.* What time is it?

RAMON.- Five past eight.

CECILIA.- I won't be on time even if I fly there.

AMPARO.- *TO RAMON.* Press number six again.

FERNANDO.- *PRESSING ALMA'S STOMACH* There, I've pressed it.

ALMA.- I told you to quit that.

MIGUEL.- *LAUGHS.* I'm going to press my Granny's  
*HE DOES SO AND SHE SMACKS HIS HANDS.*

VIRGINIA.- That's all you ever learn, the bad things.

AMPARO.- *TO RAMON.* Please.

RAMON.- Don't you see it's not working?

FRANCISCA.- *AFTER A PAUSE, TO AMPARO.* Move a little, you're squeezing me.

*AMPARO MOVES AND NOW SHE'S UP AGAINST VIRGINIA*

VIRGINIA.- Girl, I'm not just painted on here. What are you trying to do, squeeze me to death?

AMPARO.- There's no room.

VIRGINIA.- You could easily have used the stairs, this is for the elderly, like us.

FRANCISCA.- It's true, young people are strong, they can walk up and down. Look how crowded it is in here.

FERNANDO.- It just so happens that we were all very comfortable until the seventh floor. Then you and this gentleman got on. *POINTS TO RAMON.*

RAMON.- It's our building, we have a right to use the elevator.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FERNANDO.-*POINTS TO THE SIGN*. It says here very clearly that this elevator is for six people, and, with the two of you, there are eight of us...and that doesn't include the lady's cart.

VIRGINIA.- You don't expect me to carry it down, do you?

FERNANDO.- Down or up? Aren't you on your way back from the market?

VIRGINIA.- No, since it seems to interest you so much. I'm taking this to my daughter's house, groceries she ordered. Is that all right?

RAMON.- These things never used to happen. There were fewer people living in these buildings, not like nowadays...

ALMA.- There are more everywhere. Haven't you tried getting on the subway at Centrum?

FRANCISCA.- In a few years' time we'll be living on top of each other.

ALMA.- *HUGGING FERNANDO FROM BEHIND*. Sounds great!

FRANCISCA.- This is a decent neighborhood. *LOOKS STRAIGHT AT ALMA*) Or used to be.

ALMA.- Isn't it anymore?

FRANCISCA.- Not, anybody can live here now.

FERNANDO.- Nothing personal, but if we die of asphyxiation due to lack of oxygen, the last two people who got on will be responsible.

RAMON.- *STARTS COUGHING*. Don't say that, I have pulmonary emphysema.

FERNANDO.- *TO ALMA*. What does one eat with that?

ALMA.- Who knows?!

VIRGINIA.- It's tuberculosis.

RAMON.- Emphysema! It's not tuberculosis.

AMPARO.-*BANGING ON THE WALL*. Open up!

*ALL WATCH HER. SHE'S ASHAMED. ANOTHER LONG PAUSE. THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES BECOME MORE TENSE. THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE ALSO*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*BETRAY THEIR ANXIETY BUT ONLY WHEN THE OTHERS ARE NOT WATCHING THEM.*

FRANCISCA.- What floor are we on?

MIGUEL.- Fifth.

VIRGINIA.- How would you know?

FRANCISCA.- Oh, Holy Mother! If it's the fifth floor nobody's going to hear us. This is the floor they're turning into a condo and selling. Nobody lives here.

VIRGINIA.- Soon they'll be getting rid of us all.

RAMON.- Only if we allow them to.

AMPARO.- *BANGING ON THE WALL HARDER THAN BEFORE.* Open, please open!

VIRGINIA.- Didn't you just hear? Nobody lives on this floor.

AMPARO.- I have to get out. Something might happen to my son.

FRANCISCA.- Only you would think of leaving him alone.

AMPARO.- I went down to help the señora get her car out.

RAMON.- *MOCKINGLY.* You drive?

AMPARO.- I went to open the garage door.

FRANCISCA.- We can't stay here all day.

CECILIA.- *INCREASINGLY FRANTIC.* I'm going to get fired if I don't get there on time.

VIRGINIA.-*TO MIGUEL.* Stop wiggling.

MIGUEL.- I'm tired.

VIRGINIA.- I'm old and I'm not fussing.

*ANOTHER LONG PAUSE. THEY FIDGET. CECILIA TOUCHES UP HER MAKE-UP.*

*MIGUEL SITS ON HIS BACK-PACK. FRANCISCA CLEANS HER GLASSES.*

*VIRGINIA REARRANGES THE CONTENTS OF THE SHOPPING CART.*

ALMA.- Anybody got a cigarette?

FRANCISCA.- A cigarette? What for?

## LIMITED CAPACITY

ALMA.- To smoke, What else would it be for?

FRANCISCA.- Have you noticed the size of this place, the amount of oxygen we have in here?

ALMA.- There are cracks in the elevator.

RAMON.- Nobody here is going to smoke. I won't allow it!

ALMA.- It's a free country!

RAMON.- Smoking in elevators is not allowed anywhere in the world.

ALMA.- That's when there're in working order.

VIRGINIA.- Only young people would think of something like that.

ALMA.- I'll smoke a joint.

*SHE AND FERNANDO LAUGH. ANOTHER PAUSE, NOT AS LONG AS THE PREVIOUS ONE.*

MIGUEL.- *TO VIRGINIA.* May I eat an apple?

VIRGINIA.- No, they aren't washed. Anyway, if you eat one now you won't want your breakfast. You're mother's waiting for you.

FRANCISCA.- She's probably hungry.

CECILIA.- Apples aren't filling.

VIRGINIA.- He's my grandson, his mother put him in my care. He will do as I say.

FRANCISCA.- Fruit is good for you when you're scared.

MIGUEL.- I'm not scared.

*THE YOUNG PEOPLE LAUGH. ANOTHER PAUSE. CECILIA PUTS HER BAG ON THE FLOOR. SHE TRIES TO PRY THE DOOR OPEN WITH HER FINGERS, BUT CAN'T MANAGE IT.*

FRANCISCA.- Leave it, you could make it worse.

RAMON.- *BANGS ON THE WALL.* I'll sue the landlord.

VIRGINIA.- *DISCREETLY GIVING AMPARO A SHOVE.* I told you you were squeezing me.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

CECILIA.- *TO VIRGINIA.* Don't push her, now she bumped me.

VIRGINIA.- I'm sorry.

AMPARO.- I wasn't squeezing you, she's the one pushing us because of her cart.

VIRGINIA.- Can you tell me where else I should put it?

ALMA.- Elevators are for people.

VIRGINIA.- You're mistaken. They're also to bring our things in.

FRANCISCA.- You could put it in a better place.

*VIRGINIA PLACES THE CART AGAINST THE BACK WALL. SHE IS OBVIOUSLY UPSET. ANOTHER PAUSE. THE POWER GOES OUT. ALL LET OUT A MUFFLED SCREAM. THERE IS A SHORT SILENCE.*

FERNANDO.- That's done it...I smell smoke!

FRANCISCA.- Heaven help us! What could be burning!

FERNANDO.- *HIS TONE VERY SERIOUS.* The elevator.

*RAMON HAS ANOTHER COUGHING FIT, SPITS IN THE DARK.*

CECILIA.- You spat at me, idiot!

RAMON.- I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

AMPARO.- Stop pushing me!

MIGUEL.- Gran...they stepped on me.

VIRGINIA.- It must have been this maid.

ALMA.- *PLAYING FERNANDO'S GAME.* We'll be roasted alive!

FERNANDO.- They'll make soap out of our fat!

FRANCISCA.- Shut up! Death isn't a game.

RAMON.- *BANGING ON THE WALLS.* Janitor! Why aren't you opening this door?

*CECILIA FLICKS ON THE LIGHTER, HOLDS IT HIGH FOR A MINUTE, BURNS HERSELF. THE LIGHTER DROPS TO THE FLOOR. CECILIA TRIES TO PICK IT UP IN THE DARK. SHE CRIES OUT. AT THAT MOMENT THE POWER COMES BACK ON.*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

CECILIA.- Creeps!

FRANCISCA.- *SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH PREVIOUS LINE.* Thank God it's back on!

CECILIA.- Who was it?

FRANCISCA.- What happened?

CECILIA.- One of these pigs pinched me when I bend down to pick up my lighter.

FERNANDO.- A him or a her? There are have been cases.

FRANCISCA.- That's all we need, Sissies!

RAMON.- *COUGHS.* Don't generalize.

CECILIA.- Put your hand in front of your mouth when you cough. You're disgusting!

RAMON.- *UPSET.* If you had your behind pinched it's because of the way you're dressed.

CECILIA.- I dress any way I please.

RAMON.- Then don't complain.

CECILIA.- Was it you?

RAMON.- I'd prefer not to answer.

CECILIA.- Cowards! All men are cowards!

FERNANDO.- And if it turned out to be a woman? I insist, there are cases.

ALMA.- I pass. *HUGS FERNANDO.* I only like men. *GOES TO THE CART, TAKES OUT A BIG RED PEPPER, HOLDS IT UP, KISSES IT, LAUGHS.*

VIRGINIA.- *INDIGNANT, SNATCHES THE PEPPER AND PUTS IT BACK IN THE CART.* Don't touch my things.

ALMA.- Sorry, didn't know it was yours. *SHE AND FERNANDO LAUGH.*

VIRGINIA.- You brutes!

MIGUEL.- What did they say?

VIRGINIA.- Nothing.

*ANOTHER PAUSE. VIRGINIA PULLS THE CART TOWARDS HER, EXAMINES IT, PUSHES IT BACK IN ITS PLACE.*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

MIGUEL.- Didn't they say we were gonna burn?

FRANCISCA.- Fortunately, it was a false alarm.

FERNANDO.- It would've been like being in Hell. That way we would atone for our sins. In nomine patris et filii et...

FRANCISCA.- Don't make fun of sacred things!

FERNANDO.- Brooother! Everything bothers you people. We're just trying to make this business of waiting around a little more pleasant.

FRANCISCA.- You don't even live in this building.

FERNANDO.- But my chick does.

ALMA.- I live in 712.

FRANCISCA.- With your parents?

ALMA.- No, 'course not, with him. My parents are in vacations.

FRANCISCA.- With him?

VIRGINIA.- I don't suppose you're married.

ALMA.- No, I'm his...*TO FERNANDO*. What did the Unemployment Officer say I was, you know, when we registered?

FERNANDO.- My concubine.

ALMA.- That's it, concubine. Doesn't that sound neat? Like something out of "The thousand and One Nights".

AMPARO.-*AFTER A SHORT PAUSE*. Can't anyone do anything?

RAMON.- Like what?

AMPARO.- Like open. My baby...

FRANCISCA.- If anything happens to him, you'll be guilty.

AMPARO.- *TO FRANCISCA*. Guilty of what?

FRANCISCA.- I don't know why they have children if they can't take care of them.

RAMON.- We've already spent more than fifteen minutes locked up in here. I need fresh air. *COUGHS AND SPITS INTO A HANDKERCHIEF*.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- I do too. The doctor said I should always be in places with good ventilation because of my heart condition.

FERNANDO.- Now we've had it. One's got emphysema, the other a heart attack. Anybody else got a disease?

ALMA.- *WRITHING*. I'm fine.

VIRGINIA.- I haven't a heart attack, but I could get one.

CECILIA.- You only get them if you strain a lot.

VIRGINIA.- And lack of oxygen and nervous tension.

ALMA.- *LAUGHS*. Well then, you should just stay quietly at home.

FRANCISCA.- It's all right for you to laugh now because you're young. But youth comes to an end. Health is something you only borrow.

FERNANDO.- Why don't you buy it from whoever lent it to you, then you'll be all set.

VIRGINIA.- If you're healthy enough to be poking fun at the rest of us, opening that trapdoor up there should be quite a simple thing for you to do.

FERNANDO.- Me? And why should I do it? I don't need air.

VIRGINIA.- I knew you couldn't do it. That's what all young people are like: all talk, no action.

FRANCISCA.- You're right, there're just barking dogs.

ALMA.- *TO FERNANDO*. Show them you can do it.

*FERNANDO BARKS. THEY BOTH LAUGH.*

RAMON.- *TO FERNANDO*. You'd be doing us all a favor.

FERNANDO.- How can I open it? I have nothing to open it with.

RAMON.- Those trapdoors can just be pushed aside.

MIGUEL.- *CLIMBING UP ON FERNANDO*. Let me do it. I can do it.

VIRGINIA.- *PULLING HIM TOWARD HER*. You be still.

FERNANDO.- *STRETCHING UPWARDS*. I can't reach. If you want me to open it you've to help me.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

AMPARO.- *LOOKS UP*. Can we get out through there?

FRANCISCA.- I doubt it.

CECILIA.- *BANGING FEEBLY ON THE DOOR*. Somebody must realize we're lock up in here, at least the people who need to go up or down.

VIRGINIA.- When they realize the elevator's not working, they'll just take the stairs. They won't stand around, waiting. This isn't the first time this has happened.

FERNANDO.- Do you want me to climb up there or not?

RAMON.- *COUGHING*. Who would've thought I'd die in an elevator?

FERNANDO.- *BANGING LIGHTLY ON THE WALLS*. Well, you won't need to buy a coffin. This box'll do fine.

RAMON.- Moron!

FERNANDO.- If you don't apologize for that, I don't open.

RAMON.-*URNS HIS BACK TO HIM. AFTER A LONG PAUSE*. Please forgive me.

FERNANDO.- That's better.

*ANOTHER PAUSE*.

VIRGINIA.- *BREATHING DEEPLY*. Are you or aren't you going to open? I'm already feeling dizzy.

ALMA.- It's the smell. Somebody didn't take a shower this morning. *LOOKING AT FERNANDO*. And I know who that was. *WHISPERING TO THE OTHERS*. He hasn't showered in three days.

FERNANDO.- *GIVING HER A SHOVE*. Sooo, you've been spying on me, huh?

FRANCISCA.-*TO VIRGINIA*. Some people don't even change their underwear.

FERNANDO.- That's no me. My underpants are not dirty...They're not clean, either. I don't wear any! *HE START UNZIPPING HIS FLY*. Care to have a look?

ALMA.- *COVERING HIM UP WITH HER HANDS*. Don't show it to them. It's mine.

RAMON.- Your youth does not give you license to be disrespectful, especially towards ladies.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FERNANDO.- *ZIPPING UP HIS FLY*. OK, if you don't wanna take a look...but you're the ones missing out.

FRANCISCA.- I'm going to write a complaint letter about this.

VIRGINIA.- I'll back you up. They have got to get this thing repaired.

FRANCISCA.- I'm going to complain about them *POINTING TO FERNANDO AND ALMA* and the fact that people like them are allowed to live in this building.

*FERNANDO GESTURES VAGUELY. HE KISSES ALMA. THE OTHERS WATCH THEM, IRRITATED. VIRGINIA STARTS GASPING FOR AIR.*

VIRGINIA.- I need air.

FRANCISCA.- Holy Mother! Really?

VIRGINIA.-*BREATHING RAPIDLY*. God!

MIGUEL.- Gran! What's wrong?

CECILIA.- *TO FERNANDO*. Please, I beg of you, open; this lady needs fresh air.

FERNANDO.- Only because you have asked me.

RAMON.- We are all asking you.

FERNANDO.- I'm only interested in her.

ALMA.- Hey, hey, wait a minute. I'm here too.

FERNANDO.- *GOES OVER AND KISSES HER*. I know.

ALMA.-*SMILES*. Need help?

FERNANDO.- Everybody's gotta help. Give me a boost.

*HE TRIES TO CLIMB UP, LEANS ON ALMA'S HAND AND ON SHOULDERS OF THE OTHERS. AS HE GETS TO THE TOP, HE SLIPS AND FALLS CLUMSILY. EVERYONE REACTS.*

ALMA.-*AS HE'S TO FALL*. Watch out!

FERNANDO.- *ALREADY ON THE FLOOR*. See, I've my ass and it's your fault!

VIRGINIA.- *CONTEMPTUOUSLY*. I knew he couldn't do it.

ALMA.-*TO VIRGINIA*. Weren't you choking to death?

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- I am.

FRANCISCA.- *TO FERNANDO WHO TRIES TO STAND UP.* You hit me with your shoe.

ALMA.- Are you hurt?

FERNANDO.- What do you want? None of you helped.

ALMA.- You didn't tell us what to do.

FERNANDO.- Forget it. Anyway, we're gonna die of asphyxiation.

RAMON.- *COUGHING DUE TO HIS AGITATION.* Try again. We'll help you.

MIGUEL.- Lift me up. I don't weigh as much.

VIRGINIA.- You be quiet.

AMPARO.- I could climb up.

FERNANDO.-*LOOKS AT HER, MOVES ASIDE.* Up you go.

*HE LIFTS HER, TRYING TO GET HIS HANDS ON HER BUTTOCKS AND KISS HER BREAST.*

ALMA.- *JOLTING HIM.* Go ahead, keep it up.

FERNANDO.- Keep what up?

ALMA.- Only don't complain later.

CECILIA.-*SMILES AT FERNANDO.* I am asking you again.

FERNANDO.- Sure, and I can just crack my skull, right?! No way! None of you strong enough to hold me.

VIRGINIA.- *SIGHING DEEPLY, HER VOICE LOW, SHE STARTS PRAYING.* Sinner that I am, I do confess to Almighty God...*SHE FAINTS, FALLS ON THE OTHERS, THEY MAKE ROOM FOR HER AND STRETCH HER OUT ON THE FLOOR.*

FERNANDO.- Oh, shit! She's croaked! *HE LAUGHS.*

FRANCISCA.- Too bad she's not your mother.

FERNANDO.- Or yours.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

CECILIA.- *FANNING VIRGINIA WITH HER HAND.* It looks bad.

FRANCISCA.- We've got to call a doctor.

ALMA.- We could try telepathy.

AMPARO.- *PUSHES AWAY VIRGINIA'S HEAD WHICH IS RESTING AGAINST HER.*

She's hurting me.

MIGUEL.- Gran?

FERNANDO.- *TO MIGUEL.* She's fainted, that's all.

CECILIA.- No, she's going to die.

*CECILIA BANGS DESPERATELY ON THE DOOR, SO DO ALL THE OTHERS EXCEPT FERNANDO AND MIGUEL. THE LATTER TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND SNATCHES AN APPLE FROM THE CART AND STARTS EATING IT.*

ALL.- *AD LIB'S.* Open...help...janitor!...There's a dying woman in here...Please...Somebody!...Etc. etc.

ALMA.- *GOING BACK TO HER ORIGINAL PLACE.* We should give her more room so she can breathe.

FRANCISCA.- What room?

AMPARO.- *GIVING FRANCISCA A GOOD PUSH.* Move!

FRANCISCA.- How dare you touch me?

AMPARO.- *RUBBING HERSELF.* You had your elbow stuck into me.

*THEY LOOK AT VIRGINIA FOR A MOMENT. SHE STARTS COMING AROUND.*

FERNANDO.- Didn't I tell you...she's coming to.

CECILIA.- She shouldn't move. If she had a stroke, it's dangerous.

RAMON.- Let's move her so she doesn't take up so much space.

*THEY ALL MOVE VIRGINIA LIKE A DOLL, SITTING HER UP. SHE STARTS MUMBLING, COMPLAINING, TRYING TO SIT UP ALONE, AND AS SHE DOES SO, SHE THROWS UP, VOMITING ON SOME OF THE OTHERS. THIS*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*CAUSES A LOT OF CONFUSION, INSULTS FLY, THEY PUSH EACH OTHER, THEY SHOUT, ALL AT THE SAME TIME.*

FERNANDO.- That's it, I'm covered in it.

FRANCISCA.- Lord, help us! How revolting!

ALMA.- This really stinks. Gross!

CECILIA.- *MOVING TO A CORNER, FEELS NAUSEATED.* I think I'm going to throw up, too.

FRANCISCA.- Take a deep breath.

RAMON.- *CLEANING HIS FACE WITH A HANDKERCHIEF.* I got some on my face.

ALMA.- I've got beans all over my clothes.

CECILIA.-*DISGUSTED.* Shut up, please! *BEGINS MAKING SOUNDS AS THOUGH SHE MIGHT THROW UP, THEY ALL MOVE AWAY FROM HER.*

ALMA.- Would you like to sniff some cologne? I've got some here.

CECILIA.- *WIPING THE SWEAT OFF HER FOREHEAD.* I think I'll be OK. Vomit really makes me sick.

VIRGINIA.- I need air.

FERNANDO.- What you needed was to eat less.

*VIRGINIA GETS UP SLOWLY. SHE WIPES HER DRESS. AMPARO STARTS CRYING SILENTLY. SHE TURNS AWAY FROM THE OTHERS SO THEY CAN'T SEE HER CRYING. ALMA CROSSES TO HER.*

ALMA.- What's wrong?

FERNANDO.- Let her cry.

ALMA.-*HUGS AMPARO.* They'll open soon. This can't go on forever.

AMPARO.- I shouldn't have left him alone.

ALMA. I promise you, he's asleep.

AMPARO.- It's time for his bottle. He'll start crying and when he cries a lot, he doesn't breathe right: one day he turned purple. I thought he was gonna die on me.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

ALMA.- Nothing will happen to him.

*VIRGINIA TURNS AROUND AND SEES HER GRANDSON EATING THE APPLE.*

VIRGINIA.- What are you eating?

MIGUEL.- *HIDING HIS HANDS BEHIND HIS BACK.* Nothing.

VIRGINIA.- What do you mean, nothing? Show me your hands.

*THE BOY PUTS OUT HIS HANDS. VIRGINIA TAKES THE APPLE, AND THEN SHE HITS HIM. THE BOY STARTS CRYING, OR BECOMES VERY FRIGHTENED.*

ALMA.- Don't hit him.

VIRGINIA.-*TO MIGUEL.* What did I tell you? Don't you understand?

CECILIA.- Children understand a lot more when they aren't being bullied.

VIRGINIA.- *TO MIGUEL.* Today is the last time I am going to allow your mother to dumm on me. I'm too old to be looking after brats.

FRANCISCA.- *GOING TO THE DOOR, BREATHES THROUGH A CRACK IN IT.* I can't stand the stink.

ALMA.- *TAKING A LEMON FROM THE CART, SHE GIVES IT TO FRANCISCA.*  
Here, suck on it. It'll help you get over it.

VIRGINIA.- Stop taking my things.

ALMA.-*POINTING TO THE VOMIT.* That's also yours and this lady is felling ill because of it.

RAMON.- I need to sit down, I can't stay on my feet any longer.

FERNANDO.- Go ahead. But, don't complain if your ass gets wet in all that muck...

RAMON.- Thanks, I'll stay like this.

*BRIEF PAUSE.*

FRANCISCA.- They say that if you pray and have faith in Saint Anthony, he'll grant you anything you want. Why don't we try it?

ALMA.- Isn't he the saint who finds husbands for old maids?

FRANCISCA.- He grants matrimony to couples who request it.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

ALMA.- They say he's got to stand on his head.

FERNANDO.- Right, so his skirts fly!

ALMA.-*LAUGHS*. His cassock.

FRANCISCA.-*PRETENDING TO IGNORE THEIR COMMENTS*. He's a very miraculous saint. Let's pray for the elevator to start moving so that we can get out. *SHE STARTS PRAYING VERY EARNESTLY*. Blessed St. Anthony...*LOOKS AT THE OTHERS FOR THEIR ANSWER*. Blessed St. Anthony!..

ALL.- Blessed St. Anthony..

FRANCISCA.- Saint among all saints.

ALL.-Saint among all saints.

FRANCISCA.- We come to you in all humility and dare to request...

ALL.-*FERNANDO'S TONE IS MOCKING*. We come to you in all humility and dare to request...

FRANCISCA.- That, through your divine intervention, this elevator may start moving again.

ALL.- That, through your divine intervention, this elevator may start moving again.

FRANCISCA.- In exchange, we offer alms for your poor and, during thirteen consecutive Tuesdays, we will say a rosary in your temple. Grant us this, our request!

ALL.- Grant us this, our request!

FRANCISCA.- Amen.

ALL.- Amen.

*AFTER A MOMENT, FERNANDO CROSSES TO THE PANEL, PUSHES THE BUTTONS, SMILES.*

FERNANDO.-*TO FRANCISCA*.- Looks like he didn't pay much attention.

FRANCISCA.- We all have to pray at the same time.

ALMA.- Like a choir?

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FRANCISCA.- If we all pray together, it's stronger than if we pray individually. That way he'll hear us better.

ALMA.- Is he deaf?

FRANCISCA.- Don't you believe in him?

ALMA.- No one's introduced us.

FRANCISCA.- All saints belong to the Church of God.

ALMA.- Don't know him either.

FRANCISCA.- *INDIGNANT*. You don't believe in God?

ALMA.- I do and I don't. I never think about it.

FRANCISCA.- So what do you believe in?

ALMA.- Myself, and sometimes in others.

FRANCISCA.- That's not enough.

ALMA.- It is for me.

FRANCISCA.- God and his saints...

FERNANDO.- Could you leave that crap for some other time?

FRANCISCA.- It is not crap. It's something of the major importance.

FERNANDO.- The important thing is to get out of here.

FRANCISCA.- You don't believe in Him, either?

FERNANDO.-What for?

FRANCISCA.- To know that God loves us, that He forgives us, that He'll resurrect us...

FERNANDO.- That I know of, He's got nothing to forgive me, but I've lots to forgive Him.

FRANCISCA.- To forgive God?! How dare you!

VIRGINIA.- God will punish you.

FERNANDO.- Just tell me why He gives some people everything and others nothing?

RAMON.- There must be a reason.

FERNANDO.- Just to screw around.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- Don't be vulgar.

FERNANDO.- Don't listen.

CECILIA.- Is it possible that no one will open? We don't live alone. Somebody should be worrying about us.

ALMA.-*TO CECILIA.* Another optimist. So, you worry about someone else?

CECILIA.- Yes, believe it or not, as much as I can, I do worry about my family...

ALMA.- About those who serve us.

RAMON.- That's not true.

FERNANDO.- Isn't it?

AMPARO.- It's not like that in my village.

FRANCISCA.- You should have stayed there then.

VIRGINIA.- *TO FERNANDO.* People with no manners, like the two of you...

FERNANDO.- Weren't you dying?

VIRGINIA.- You like that, wouldn't you? To have me die, to have all educated people die so you can keep every thing without ever having worked for it or in any way deserving it.

FERNANDO.- Hey, now you're talking. And who knows, I might even land myself a brand new car. *HE AND ALMA LAUGH.*

*A LONG PAUSE. RAMON COUGHS AGAIN, ONLY NOW HE'S NO LONGER CONCERNED ABOUT SPITTING ON THE OTHERS. THEY ALL MOVE AROUND, PUSHING EACH OTHER.*

MIGUEL.- *SHOWING HIS GRANDMOTHER HIS LEG.* Look, Gran, that man spat on me.

VIRGINIA.- Filthy pig!

MIGUEL.- Clean it!

VIRGINIA.- *DISGUSTED.* Clean it with your handy.

MIGUEL.- I haven't got one.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- I gave you one today.

MIGUEL.- Didn't bring it.

VIRGINIA.- Does anybody have a Kleenex?

*CECILIA GIVES HER ONE. VIRGINIA GIVES IT TO THE BOY.*

VIRGINIA.- Clean it properly. *WATCHES HIM.* Careful, don't touch it with your fingers. That's right. Higher up! Look, there...can't you see? Now, throw it away.  
*THE BOY PUTS THE KLEENEX INTO RAMON'S COAT POCKET. RAMON SAYS NOTHING.*

*A BRIEF PAUSE. AMPARO LOOKS AROUND, CHANGES HER PLACE.*

AMPARO.- Help me. I can open the trapdoor. Please.

*TRIES CLIMBING ON ALL THE OTHERS, PUSHES THEM, THEY PUSH HER, THEY INSULT HER, SHE DOESN'T GIVE UP TRYING, SCREAMING OUT THAT SHE HAS TO GET TO HER SON. ALMA AND FERNANDO HELP HER. FINALLY SHE FALLS. SHOUTING IS RENEWED.*

AMPARO.- *ON THE FLOOR, CRYING.* My son, I must go to my son.

FRANCISCA.- Fool! You're hurting me!

VIRGINIA.- And me. *TO AMPARO.* Dam Indians!

*A LONGER PAUSE. AMPARO GETS UP, SNIVELING, AND FINDS A PLACE TO STAND. ALMA AND FERNANDO LISTEN TO THE RADIO. THE TIME IS ANNOUNCED. WE SHOULD HEAR THAT IT IS 8.40 A.M.*

RAMON.- *HAS ANOTHER COUGHING FIT, THIS ONE IS MORE INTENSE; COVERS HIS MOUTH WITH HIS COAT AND SPITS INTO IT.* I can't breathe.

CECILIA.-*BANGS ON THE WALL.* Have pity! Open!

RAMON.- The air in here es foul already.

FRANCISCA.- So.'s the air in the whole city.

AMPARO.- He'll die. I know he'll die. My poor son will die all alone.

FRANCISCA.- If somebody doesn't open, we'll be the ones to die.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FERNANDO.- We'll die like true citizens of the nation's capital: squashed, squashed like common roaches.

ALMA.- Hungry roaches. *TAKES A BANANA FROM THE CART AND STARTS EATING IT.*

FERNANDO.- *HELPS HIMSELF TO ANOTHER BANANA, PEELS IT, STARTS EATING; SPEAKS WITH HIS MOUTH FULL.* That's right, like hungry roaches.

VIRGINIA.- Who gave you permission to eat my fruit?

ALMA.-*TO FERNANDO.* How can you swallow with the way this place stinks of puke?

FERNANDO.-*EATING.* Puke, armpit and fart. Don't think I didn't smell it, whoever it was...*THEY BOTH LAUGH.*

VIRGINIA.- *TO RAMON.* Tell these young people not to eat my fruit.

FERNANDO.- Everything in here belongs to everyone.

RAMON.- *TO VIRGINIA.* Me? Why should I?

VIRGINIA.- Because you're a man. It's your duty to protect women.

ALMA.-*TO VIRGINIA.* You want a man like him to defend us? *LAUGHS.* You'd be better off if I protect you.

RAMON.-*UPSET-* How can you make that kind of comparison?

ALMA.- Why not? What have you got that we don't have? Balls? If that's case, we've got ovaries. And a man's balls aren't mucho good without us.

VIRGINIA.- What language.

FRANCISCA.- Young people like these think that begin vulgar makes them modern and liberated. They're just crass, crass and common. And common things are worthless, they just get thrown in the garbage.

*BRIEF PAUSE.*

MIGUEL.- Can't hold on, Gran, I'm gonna pee in my pants.

FERNANDO.- Another vulgar creature. *TO MIGUEL.* Don't you know, little boy, that you should say " I need to go potty" or " I need to do number one"? You shouldn't

## LIMITED CAPACITY

say " I'm gonna pee" or " I'm gonna take a leak". What kind of upbringing have you had?

VIRGINIA.- Leave my grandson alone.

MIGUEL.- I've been holding on for a long time.

VIRGINIA.- Well, you can hold on for a bit longer.

MIGUEL.- I gotta go.

FERNANDO.- Go to the toilet, it's down that way and then to the right; do one for me at the same time. *FERNANDO, ALMA AND THE BOY LAUGH.* And if you can't make it, just pee on the floor. Hell: pee and puke and spit, great combination. *IMITATING A COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCER, GETS CLOSER TO THE WOMEN.* Would you care for some cream to prevent premature wrinkles? Would you like to change the color of your hair? Take one part red vomit, two parts yellow urine and one green phlegm and mix well. Once its ready, apply twice a day, massaging gently. It never fails.

ALMA.-*LAUGHING.* You are so gross.

FERNANDO.- You 're accusing me? I haven't peed, puked or spat. Why don't you tell them, there're the pigs.

FRANCISCA.- *VERY COLDLY.* May I have your attention.

FERNANDO.-*IMITATING AN AIRPORT ANNOUNCER.* May I have your attention, the elevator will begin moving three hours behind schedule.

ALMA.- That didn't work.

FERNANDO.- Jealousy is eating away at your guts.

ALMA.- Cut it out, OK?

FRANCISCA.- I am begging you, please.

ALMA.- Who are we praying now?

FRANCISCA.- I'd like to say something else.

AMPARO.- Someone's coming to open!

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*THEY ALL BUNCH UP AGAINST THE DOOR, THEY CALL OUT ASKING FOR THE DOOR TO BE OPENED, THEY BANG ON THE WALL. FRANCISCA'S SHOUTING CAN BE HEARD ABOVE THE OTHERS. THEN THEY START CALMING DOWN.*

FRANCISCA.- I want to make an appeal to sanity. We are all civilized people, we live in a respectable community, we have an education and we have principles. This is a difficult moment, I know, but that doesn't mean to say we have to behave like savages. We have insulted and hurt each other over very trivial matters. Why? In situations like this we should be able to show our manners, our solidarity, our love toward our fellow-creatures. I ask you to forgive me for everything I have said and done to this moment. I think it's time we all shook hands and join in, in a common effort to find a solution to this minor incident. *SHE OFFERS HER HAND.* Here it is.

FERNANDO.- *LAUGHS AND PUTS HIS HAND OUT.* Here's mine. *HE SHAKES FRANCISCA'S HAND.* To each his own: that deserves an eight.

FRANCISCA.- *HURT.* I meant what I said.

FERNANDO.- So did I. That was a great speech.

FRANCISCA.- *DISTURBED, NOT SURE IF HE'S BEING HONEST OR LAUGHING AT HER.* Thank you.

RAMON.- Shh, quiet, I think I hear someone out there.

CECILIA.- *BANGS ON THE WALL.* Open! Open!

*THEY ALL PICK UP ON HER AND START BANGING AND SHOUTING.*

AMPARO.- We're here, we're here.

RAMON.- They could be trying to say something and we wouldn't hear them.

*COMPLETE SILENCE, SOME WITH THEIR EARS UP AGAINST THE WALL. AMPARO CRIES QUIETLY. A FEW SECONDS GO BY.*

FERNANDO.- Rats! There's nobody.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

RAMON.- I heard something that sounded like a woman's heels.

ALMA.- You just imagined it.

RAMON.- I'm positive.

AMPARO.-*THROWS HERSELF AGAINST THE DOOR, DESPERATE.* Señora, please, open and if you can't, then tell Pancho, the janitor, to go up and check on my son, I left him alone, please, please!

FERNANDO.- There's no one out there. We'd have heard them if they were there.

RAMON.- Yes, I think I made a mistake.

ALMA.-*TO AMPARO.* I promise you, it won't be long now.

*PAUSE. MIGUEL MOVES. HE GOES TO THE EDGE WHERE HE WON'T BE NOTICED.*

MIGUEL.-*WHISPERING TO HIS GRANDMOTHER.* I did it.

VIRGINIA.- *FEELING THE BOYS PANTS, GETS ANGRY AND STARTS SMACKING HIS BEHIND.* I told you to hold on! You dirty pig!

MIGUEL.- I couldn't.

*VIRGINIA KEEPS SPANKING HIM BECAUSE OF HER OWN ANXIETY.*

AMPARO.- *TAKING VIRGINIA'S HANDS.* Let him go.

VIRGINIA.- Don't you interfere!

AMPARO.- *SQUEEZING VIRGINIA'S ARM, HURTING HER.* I'm telling you to let him go!

VIRGINIA.- Let go of me!

AMPARO.- Not until you promise to stop hitting him.

VIRGINIA.- You miserable cow!

RAMON.- *TRIES TO PULL AMPARO AWAY.* Let her go!

FERNANDO.- *THREATENING.* Butt out, this is between women.

FRANCISCA.- You mean between a lady and a maid.

ALMA.- They are both women.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- *STARTS BREATHING RAPIDLY, GRABS HER CHEST AS SHE LETS GO OF AMPARO.* Have mercy, Mother of God.

FERNANDO.- If you're thinking of falling down, remember the pee and the puke.

VIRGINIA.-*LEANING AGAINST THE WALL.* I feel very ill.

ALMA.- She's very pale, it could be real this time.

FRANCISCA.-*TO AMPARO.* It'll be your fault if she dies.

AMPARO.- *FRIGHTENED.* I didn't do anything.

FRANCISCA.- They'll put you in jail and they'll take your son away from you.

AMPARO.- *DESPERATELY GRABBING FRANCISCA'S DRESS AND SHAKING HER.*

Say that's a lie, say it! *FRANCISCA BECOMES TERRIFIED BY AMPARO'S REACTION AND DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, FERNANDO SEPARATES THEM.*

FERNANDO.- *QUIETING AMPARO.* Leave her alone.

AMPARO.- She says I killed her.

ALMA.- We are witnesses that you didn't.

MIGUEL.-Is my Gran going to die?

CECILIA.- No, she's just sick.

FRANCISCA.- *MOVING AWAY FROM AMPARO, FROM THAT PLACE SHE THREATENS HER.* You are going to pay for this. I'm going to see that you get fired.

AMPARO.-*ONCE AGAIN SHE DESPERATELY GRABS HER AND SHAKES HER. IN HER ANGER SHE BRAKES HER NECKLET IN MANY LITTLE PIECES THAT FELL ON THE FLOOR.* If you do that I sure I'll kill you.

FRANCISCA.- *TO EVERYBODY, MOVING AWAY FROM AMPARO.* You are witnesses that she wants to kill me.

FERNANDO.- And that you threaten her of taking away her job.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*ANOTHER TENSE PAUSE IS DONE. FRANCISCA ASKS MIGUEL TO HELP HER PICK UP THE PIECES OF THE NECKLET. SHE PUTS THEM IN HER PURSE.*

VIRGINIA.-*SUFFOCATING.* If I die tell the mother of this child, he knows where to find her.

RAMON.-*BANGING ON THE WALL.* You brutes! Get this thing opened!

*HE GETS ANOTHER COUGHING FIT AND SPITS ON VIRGINIA. SHE RECOVERS.*

VIRGINIA.- You disgusting old pig!

FERNANDO.-*LAUGHS.* Your illnesses don't last long, do they, lady?

VIRGINIA.- *TO RAMON.* You should be in a hospital, not here.

FERNANDO.- *TO RAMON.* Did you read that coughing is one of the first symptoms of AIDS.

RAMON.- *INDIGNANT.* I'd like to hit you.

FERNANDO.- Don't hold back, go ahead.

*HE GIVES RAMON A SHOVE, RAMON DEFENDS HIMSELF. THE OTHERS SEPARATE THEM. THERE IS ANOTHER PAUSE.*

CECILIA.- How long have we been in here.

FRANCISCA.- That's not what's important. How long we have left, that's what counts.

CECILIA.- And if some one did this on purpose?

FRANCISCA.- This what?

CECILIA.- This, locking us up, stop the elevator from moving. Doesn't make sense that it's taking so long.

FRANCISCA.- Why would anybody want to do it?

CECILIA.- Could be robbers that are emptying out our apartments.

FERNANDO.- *FRIGHTENED.* True, why hadn't I thought of that. This could be Rocky's trick.

ALMA.- *CATCHING ONTO HIS GAME.* Rocky's? Can't be. You told me you don't see him anymore.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FERNANDO.- He must want us to die slowly. We won't have any food, or water, or oxygen, for hours and hours.

FRANCISCA.- Who is this Rocky character?

ALMA.- Don't tell her.

FERNANDO.- A guy that lives in this building, sell drugs. I owe him a lot of bread. This is his revenge.

ALMA.- But Fernando, I told you to pay him.

FERNANDO.- Please tell me how?

ALMA.- This is all because of your addictions.

FERNANDO.- *VIOLENTLY*. They're mine, not yours.

ALMA.- Right, all yours, but it just so happens that because of them we're all going to die.

FERNANDO.- In short, where did you want me to get the bread from...did you want me to steal it?

ALMA.- You know he gave you a second chance. Well, he did the last time.

FERNANDO.- A chance? That guy doesn't give anything.

ALMA.- He asked you to go to bed with him. Tell me it's not true.

FERNANDO.- You think I should have?

ALMA.- That's your business, but I think it would've been better than being locked up in here and left to die, asphyxiated.

FERNANDO.- I'm a man. I don't go in for that stuff.

ALMA.- Doing it once wouldn't have turned you into a sissy.

FERNANDO.- Never, do you hear me? Never!

ALMA.- Your problem is that you're so selfish.

AMPARO.- *SCARED, TO FERNANDO*. Do you really think we'll die? What about my son?

FERNANDO.- *BURSTS OUT LAUGHING*. Don't worry, we were just kidding!

## LIMITED CAPACITY

ALMA.-*LAUGHING*. You were really getting turned on with that Rocky stuff. I saw you. I think you're bi.

VIRGINIA.- Well, I guess you couldn't care less that a child is listening to you, an innocent child.

CECILIA.- No one's innocent these days. *TO MIGUEL*. Tell your grandmother how children are made.

MIGUEL.- *ASHAMED*. I...I...

CECILIA.- Don't you know?

MIGUEL.- At school taught us that when a man and woman...

VIRGINIA.- Child!

ALMA.-*LAUGHS*. They get the theory, they just need the practice!

FRANCISCA.- If we have to spend time together, let's do it with love.

FERNANDO.- Right, now you're talking! How many are we? I'll do it with Alma. *HE HUGS HER EROTICALLY AND THEN GIVES RAMON A PUSH*. You with her. *POINTS TO FRANCISCA*. The lady can take the maid and you, kid, with her. *HE PUSHES THE BOY TOWARD CECILIA, HE HUGS AND KISSES ALMA IN A CORNER, FRANCISCA ATTEMPTS SEPARATING THEM*.

FRANCISCA.- I've put up with your insolence long enough. I have tried to make things peaceful but I see it's not possible.

AMPARO.-*DESPERATELY, IN A LOW VOICE, ALMOST TO HERSELF*.

Open, open, open.

VIRGINIA.- Air.

*RAMON COUGHS, SPITS INTO A HANDKERCHIEF, CECILIA BREAKS DOWN*.

CECILIA.- Enough! This is enough! I can't spend another minute in here! I'm going to get fired from my job. *SHE BANGS AGAINST THE WALL AND STARTS BITING HER HAND*.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

FERNANDO.- *TRIES TO CALM HER DOWN.* They won't be long now, I'm sure of it, in fact, they must be fixing it downstairs by now.

CECILIA.- *CONTROLS HERSELF AND THEN BURSTS AGAIN.* I don't care about the job, I can get another one...I'm terrified of being locked in, I'm going to go nuts if we don't get out of here! *SHE STIFLES HER SOBS.*

FERNANDO.-I'll try to open.

CECILIA.- I'm begging you.

FERNANDO.-*TO THE OTHERS.* But you've got to help me.

*THIS TIME THEY ALL COOPERATE, LIFTING HIM TOWARD THE TRAPDOOR, HE MANEUVERS, BANGS, BUT TO NO EFFECT.*

RAMON.- See if it has screws.

FERNANDO.- Can't see any.

FRANCISCA.- You've got to push hard.

*FERNANDO DOES SO, LOSES HIS BALANCE AND FALLS. SCREAMS AND SHOVES. FERNANDO MOANS AND GRABS ONE HAND WITH HIS OTHER ONE. FURIOUS, HE GETS UP AND GOES OVER TO THE CART AND STARTS KICKING IT.*

VIRGINIA.- My cart.

FERNANDO.- The hell with everything!

ALMA.- Did something happen to you?

FERNANDO.- I think I fucked up my hand.

ALMA.- Let me see.

*TAKES HIS HAND. FERNANDO SCREAMS IN PAIN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.*

FERNANDO.- Watch out, idiot, you're hurting me.

ALMA.- Don't move it.

*TAKES THE HAND, HE SCREAMS AGAIN AND SWEATS FROM THE PAIN.*

FRANCISCA.- Must be broken.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

ALMA.- Now what?

CECILIA.- Best thing would be to take him and get it X-rayed.

FERNANDO.- Hurts like hell.

CECILIA.- I'll bandage it up for you.

ALMA.- *JEALOUS*. It's OK, I'll do it. *LOOKS AROUND FOR SOMETHING TO USE*.

Anybody have a cloth of some sort?

*THEY ALL SHAKE THEIR HEAD AND TURN AWAY NOT WILLING TO GIVE UP ANYTHING OF THEIR OWN. ALMA TAKES OFF HER BLOUSE OR HER SKIRT. WITH IT SHE BANDAGES HIS HAND AND FERNANDO RELAXES.*

FRANCISCA.- *NOTICING ALMA'S STATE OF UNDRRESS OFFERS SOMETHING FOR HER TO WEAR, A SCARF OR A SWEETER*. Cover your self up!

ALMA.-*TO FERNANDO WITHOUT PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO FRANCISCA, MOCKINGLY*. You were screaming louder than a woman giving birth.

FERNANDO.- Yeah, you weren't the one in pain.

RAMON.- Great! You should've broken your head, too, not just your hand.

FERNANDO.- Fucking old sourpuss!

RAMON.- *CONFRONTING FERNANDO*. Repeat that, so I can break something else.

*FERNANDO GIVES HIM A HARD PUSH WITH HIS FREE HAND. THEY FIGHT. THEY FALL DOWN. THE WOMEN TRY AND SEPARATE THEM. RAMON ALMOST CHOKES. ALMA ASKS FERNANDO TO WATCH HIS HAND.*

MIGUEL.- You're squishing me.

*HIS GRANDMOTHER RESCUES HIM. THE BOY GASPS. SHE GASPS FROM THE EFFORT.*

RAMON.- *GETTING UP TO CATCH HIS BREATH, HE'S DIRTY*. Air, I need lots of air!

*VIRGINIA MOANS, FRANCISCA PRAYS, FERNANDO COMPLAINS ABOUT HIS HAND.*

## LIMITED CAPACITY

CECILIA.- *COVERING UP HER EARS WITH HER HANDS.* Please, stop complaining.

Please! I can't stand it any more.

AMPARO.- *HER VOICE SOMBER.* It's God's will.

FRANCISCA.- Why did you say that?

AMPARO.- It's shaking!

ALMA.- *HER FACE CHANGES COMPLETELY, SHE'S FRIGHTENED NOW.*

Shaking?

CECILIA.- Don't move! *THEY ALL STOP, TENSE.*

AMPARO.- That's what we get for living in the city, for abandoning our roots. Our punishment, to die broken, crushed, our guts bursting out.

FRANCISCA.- Merciful God! It is shaking!

*TERRIFIED, THEY ALL REACT TO THE TREMOR. THEY TRY PRESSING UP AGAINST THE WALLS, SOME CROUCH TO PROTECT THEMSELVES. ALMA BECOMES HYSTERICAL. MIGUEL CLINGS TO HIS GRANDMOTHER. FRANCISCA PRAYS OUT LOUD. AMPARO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO'S NOT SCARED.*

AMPARO.- We're going to die one on top of the other, with the bodies confused. Your leg would be my leg, your blood would be my blood. Mother earth calls us.

FERNANDO.- I don't feel anything.

ALMA.- I don't want to die like this!

FERNANDO.- *GRABS HER AGAIN.* It's not shaking!

ALMA.- Mother! Mother!

AMPARO.- In the bottom of the earth I'll join my son, he must be already there waiting for me.

RAMON.-*COUGHS.* He is right, it's not shaking.

CECILIA.- Oh, Lord!

FRANCISCA.- It's already time that you think about God. You didn't pray with me.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

CECILIA.- It was just an expression. He's not going to take us out from here, or is He?

AMPARO.- Nobody can scape to His designs. The earth is blended with water, with blood; now everything is mud, and in the mud everything sinks.

CECILIA.- This thing will never work after that earthquake.

FERNANDO.- It didn't shake, there was no earthquake. You hear and feel earthquakes, everything creaks and rumbles.

ALMA.- *A LITTLE CALMER.* Swear that it isn't shaking anymore.

FERNANDO.- I swear it.

*FERNANDO HUGS HER PROTECTIVELY. A LONGER PAUSE. THE PAWER GOES OUT AND THE COMPLAINT WILL BECOME MORE VIOLENT; THEY BANG, SHOUT, INSULT ONE ANOTHER, KICK THE FLOOR, MOAN AND GROAN. THE POWER WILL BE OUT QUITE A WHILE. THE NOISE WILL INCREASE. SHORT INTERVALS OF SILENCE. AMPARO HUMS LOUDER. THE OTHERS INSULT HER. WHEN THE POWER COMES BACK ON MIGUEL IS LYING ON THE FLOOR, MOTIONLESS. CECILIA THREATENS THEM ALL WITH A PISTOL. RAMON CANNOT STOP COUGHING. VIRGINIA HAS A HARD TIME BREATHING. CECILIA SLAPS RAMON WITH HER FREE HAND; HE CAN HARDLY BREATHE.*

CECILIA.- *AFTER SHE SLAPS RAMON.* You're the one who grabbed my breast. Do you deny it?

RAMON.- *CHOKING.* I..., I...

CECILIA.- *POINTS THE PISTOL AL FERNANDO.* Or war it you?

FERNANDO.- *HALF JOKING, A LITTLE SCARED.* You can frisk me.

CECILIA.- Whoever it was is a piece of shit.

VIRGINIA.- *SEES MIGUEL AT THE OTHER END AND STARTS CROSSING TO HIM, FRIGHTENED.* My boy! *TO CECILIA.* Please, young lady, put that thing away.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

*CECILIA DOES SO.* Is he dead? *REACHES THE BOY AND TRIES PICKING HIM UP.*

ALMA.- I think he was trampled.

*THE TWO OF THEM CARRY THE BOY. THEY PUSH THE OTHERS OUT OF THE WAY. FRANCISCA GIVES CECILIA A HARD SHOVE AND, UPSET, CECILIA RETURNS IT.*

CECILIA.- Stay away from me. You stink.

FRANCISCA.- You're the one who stinks.

ALMA.- I can't hold him any longer.

FERNANDO.- Put him on the floor.

ALMA.- It's dirty.

CECILIA.-*TO FRANCISCA.* Hypocrite! *GIVES HER A PUSH.*

FRANCISCA.- *PUSHING HER BACK.* Prostitute!

CECILIA.- *PULLS HER PISTOL OUT AGAIN AND THREATENS FRANCISCA WITH IT.* Say that again.

VIRGINIA.- *HELP ALMA TO PUT MIGUEL DOWN.* Can't you see my boy dying or is already dead.

AMPARO.- We all killed him, and that's how we'll all murder each other, parents will murder their children, husbands will murder their wives, friends will murder their friends. Nobody will be left alive and only scavengers will remain on earth.

FERNANDO.- *POINTED TO MIGUEL.* He's still breathing.

VIRGINIA.- Holy Mother, in exchange for his life I sacrifice my agony to you!

FRANCISCA.-*KNEELING, EXTENDS HER ARMS AND SINGS.* " Oh Mary, Mother of mine, oh confort of mortals, protect me and take me to my Heavenly Father".

VIRGINIA.- *PRAYING AND THEN KISSING THE CHILD.* Miguel, Miguelito!

AMPARO.- The first to die will be the children and the virgins will follow.

RAMON.- *COUGH AND SPIT NEAR TO VIRGINIA.* Excuse me.

## LIMITED CAPACITY

VIRGINIA.- I beg you to spit on me. God is punishing mi. for my sin, because of my pride. Lord, I am your most humble servant!

*RAMON COUGHS AGAIN AND, FOLLOWING VIRGINIA'S REQUEST, SPITS ON HER NECK. VIRGINIA CAN'T SUPPRESS HER REVOLT AND HER ANGER AND SHE REACTS.*

VIRGINIA.- You syphilitic, tuberculous old piece of filth!

*FERNANDO STANDING BESIDE RAMON LAUGHS.*

FERNANDO.- Syphilitic and tuberculous. That's pretty heavy load, man.

*RAMON IS VERY UPSET BY VIRGINIA'S INSULT AND HE SUDDENLY STRIKES A BLOW TO FERNANDO'S GROIN. FERNANDO FALLS. UPROAR STARTS UP AGAIN.*

RAMON.- Nobody's going to laugh at me.

AMPARO.- Then the young will die, those who have not yet sinned.

ALMA.- *BELIEVING HE IS DEAD, SHE THROWS HERSELF ON HIS BODY, PUSHING THE OTHERS AWAY. Fernando! HE DOESN'T REACT, SHE TURNS ON RAMON. Murderer!*

*ALMA STANDS AND TRIES TO SNATCH CECILIA'S PISTOL AWAY FROM HER. THEY STRUGGLE OVER THE WEAPON. EVERYONE SHOUTS AND BECOME INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE. SCREAMS. SUDDENLY THE POWER GOES OUT AGAIN. THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES IN THE DARK. A SHOT IS HEAR AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER A STIFLED SCREAM. THEN SILENCE. EVERYONE'S AGITATED BREATHING CAN BE HEARD. A VOICE WE MUST NOT RECOGNIZE SHOULD BE HEARD.*

VOICE.- Is dead!

*ABSOLUTE SILENCE. MUSIC. ACTORS LEAVE IN THE DARK. WHEN LIGHTS COME UP THE ELEVATOR IS EMPTY.*

LIMITED CAPACITY

*END*