

YOUR WEAPON AGAINST THE UNRELENTING CELLULITE | Extract

RAMÍREZ crosses the stage and the sitting area. SANTIAGO speaks from his seat.

SANTIAGO. Uh, excuse me, excuse me... please.

RAMÍREZ. Are you talking to me?

SANTIAGO. Yes.

RAMÍREZ. Listen, the truth is I'm not here anymore.

SANTIAGO. I know, but I just wanted to...

RAMÍREZ. You'd better talk to the audience. That's the idea. You are the theatre.

SANTIAGO. Right, but I...

RAMÍREZ. You're still contaminated. For all of you, I'm still someone, some kind of authority. I'm nobody. You're alone, you're among peers. Outside doesn't exist. Everything comes from inside.

SANTIAGO. It'll just take a second...

RAMÍREZ. I said no. It'll distort the whole thing.

SANTIAGO. Please.

RAMÍREZ. Fine, but please hurry up.

SANTIAGO. I just wanted to congratulate you.

RAMÍREZ. Congratulate me?

SANTIAGO. *Approaches him, shakes his hand and hugs him enthusiastically.* Good job.

RAMÍREZ. Are you teasing me?

SANTIAGO. No. How can you say that? May I have your autograph? *Hands him a piece of paper.*

RAMÍREZ. *Signing an autograph.* You might as well get it now, because I don't know if you'll want one in twelve hours.

SANTIAGO. I think this play is very interesting.

RAMÍREZ. I'm very glad. Now, if you'll excuse me.

RAMÍREZ steps away from SANTIAGO and prepares to leave. SANTIAGO stands in the way.

SANTIAGO. I just wanted to say...

RAMÍREZ. More? This is an abuse.

SANTIAGO. *Yawning.* ... that this play is... How can I explain? From what we've seen so far I'm quite impressed about the way you've captured... What's the word I'm looking for? I apologize... I don't know how to define it... That thing that is so hard to see in shows nowadays. I dare to call it, using a term that I know is a little imprecise... How can I say it? Boredom... But, don't get me wrong, it's a type of boredom... um, I don't know... sort of authentic...

RAMÍREZ. That's true. It's an ever-present objective for me.

SANTIAGO. I'm glad to hear it doesn't happen by mere chance, but it's actually the result of a long reflective process.

RAMÍREZ. And work. True art is always the result of hard work. I assure you it's not easy. People think it is, but it isn't...

SANTIAGO. I don't think it is. Well, I don't want to make you late. Goodbye.

RAMÍREZ. I mean, creating a boring play is not difficult. Everybody does that and very well. You can see it every day... But I mean something like what I believe you've managed to understand so shrewdly and cleverly...

SANTIAGO. Thank you very much. It means a lot to me, especially coming from you.

RAMÍREZ. Yes, I was talking about some unbearable play. One of those plays in which you want to kill the director, the actors, the person sitting next to you... Do you know what I mean?

SANTIAGO. I'm not sure I do.

RAMÍREZ. A play that takes away your desire of ever wanting to visit another theatre. They say theatre is in crisis, don't they? Well, that's the only way to start anew. Yet it takes a lot of talent to do that, although I shouldn't say so myself. Well, I'm off...

SANTIAGO. You've got lots of talent, of course.

RAMÍREZ. I appreciate your support because, to be honest, I'm largely misunderstood.

SANTIAGO. I can't believe it. Maybe people aren't ready to understand a play like yours.

RAMÍREZ. It's a pleasure hearing you talk, but you're most likely just saying that to suck up to me.

SANTIAGO. Suck up to you? I don't even do that with my boss. Why would I do it with you? I just say what I feel. And what I feel when seeing your play is such a level of desperation that I was wondering how someone could be so idiotic that they'd choose to see this nightmare. I said to myself over and over again, "Won't you ever learn? Haven't you seen a lot of shit in your life—excuse my language—to never want to go back to a theatre?" The truth is, I really wanted to kill you. And now that you're standing in front of

me, I feel like killing you again. So I'm gonna. I set the world free from swindlers and pedants... *Throws himself over RAMÍREZ.*

RAMÍREZ. *Getting away from him.* I must truly congratulate you and myself. I've achieved all of my goals. There still are chaste spectators left, like you. You give me hope. One thing, though. Remember that this is fiction. You've got to learn to control yourself.

SANTIAGO. *Chasing after him through the audience.* Fiction my ass! You should stop talking, you arrogant scoundrel! Do you think that I and everyone else in the theatre have nothing else to do other than to put up with your rubbish?! And as if that weren't enough, you want to go home and leave us here for twelve hours! You're a...

RAMÍREZ. *Climbing the stage.* Very good! You're now feeling something. Finally! Although I believe you should come back to the theatre some other day to see the play again and grasp the many details you may miss today.

SANTIAGO. *Climbs the stage and grabs Ramírez by the throat.* And you dare to gloat over this! I can't stand you anymore! I'll kill you. *He starts choking him.*

Simultaneously, BARTOLA has arrived late and is looking for her seat.

BARTOLA. Oh, I'm sorry I'm late... I'm so embarrassed... Tell me, did it start a long time ago? Did I miss much? I can't believe I'm so late... There was a horrible traffic jam. To top it all off, I ran into Paquita at the door. You know, she's really a pest, the poor thing. She wanted to tell me about Juanita's accident, yes, Mr. Valdés' wife. You know her, right? *Whispering.* Yes, the fat lady who dyes her own wig. As if I hadn't heard about it before her! She must think I don't have good sources... Oh, how embarrassing to have people stand up for me... So, what's been going on? Have many people died already?

RAMÍREZ. *Grabbing SANTIAGO's arms.* Listen, I honestly believe that killing me will only give you trouble: you'll end up in jail, you'll contract AIDS and it'll be a waste of time.

SANTIAGO. *Letting go of RAMÍREZ's throat.* Yes, you're right.

RAMÍREZ. *Putting SANTIAGO's arms to SANTIAGO's own throat.* I suggest that you make a salutary decision and release all that energy on yourself. Go ahead, squeeze. Kill yourself.

SANTIAGO. Don't give me ideas... I've been going through a rough patch.

BARTOLA. *Looking at the stage.* Oh! But, what am I seeing! Oh, something's happening to me! I'm fainting!

RAMÍREZ. Come on, do it! Why would you go on living? My only regret is that you won't get to experience the boredom of this play, since it just started. I believe tonight something really big will happen... something like metaphysical boredom...

SANTIAGO. *Setting himself free.* Pardon me?

RAMÍREZ. A type of boredom that will not only annihilate the audience physically, but in all levels: mentally...

SANTIAGO. Damn! Some boredom!

BARTOLA. How rude!

RAMÍREZ. More, a lot more. There are no words to describe it. And this is where you can jump in freely.

SANTIAGO. I? Jump in?

RAMÍREZ. Yes. I see you're open to new experiences. That's not a common thing. People are too narrow-minded. I'll make you a proposal.

SANTIAGO. Me? Not me. *To the audience.* They are more adequate. Look at all these people. Look at that man, for example. He looks wealthy. Maybe he'll pay you.

RAMÍREZ. No, please, don't be crude. I may not get much out of spectators, but the public institutions and the ministries are much more clear-sighted than other people. They understand me and subsidize everything without problems. This play is so boring that it was subsidized right away. You're the chosen one!

BARTOLA. Of course, he looks so tough. When I tell my girlfriends, they won't believe me. I'm not surprised, they all think he's so insignificant...

SANTIAGO. What do you want from me?

RAMÍREZ. Something completely different. I see in you the average man. I see the 99% of people that I see in the streets or, actually, the people I don't see in the streets. The invisible man. Someone common, insignificant, bland, dumb...

BARTOLA. That's what I say. I've been telling him the same thing...

SANTIAGO. Well, I appreciate it.

RAMÍREZ. Yes, someone who could be one of mine. I'm offering you a future: you could belong to me... You'd start as an Enthusiast. And, if my intuition serves me well, you could be promoted quickly. What do you think? You won't have to be yourself anymore. Because, if I'm not wrong, you could leave behind your wife, your children, your family, your country, your religion, your job, your T.V. to follow me...

SANTIAGO. I most certainly couldn't leave my T.V.

BARTOLA. Of course not. I don't know why these people always want to take away the T.V.

RAMÍREZ. You have to choose.

SANTIAGO. Don't make me choose! It makes me suffer so much.

BARTOLA. Yes, me too. Today I was supposed to buy some shampoo and I almost went insane...

SANTIAGO. As for everything else ... I don't know... Everything is so sudden...

RAMÍREZ. You're stepping into a new dimension in your life, which you've never dreamed of before: liberation through boredom. I'll be your master in this initiation journey. I'm not going home. I'm staying.

BARTOLA. I wouldn't trust him. In these places one needs to be careful. Everyone says so. But, how come he got up there?

SANTIAGO. Thank you for believing in me. It's a great honor. No one ever does that, unless they want my money or my vote... But, I can't. I gotta go.

BARTOLA. Good answer. He knocked him for a loop.

RAMÍREZ. *Retaining him.* You're shutting your mind. You're letting out the individual, the past, the mediocre man. Come on, don't hesitate. Be part of something. I'm talking about solidarity, unity, communion, participation...

SANTIAGO. I'd like to discuss it with my wife. She could be part of it, too.

BARTOLA. Honey, I love you. I love you. I'm completely in love with you.

RAMÍREZ. No. There's a big chance that you may have fun together.

SANTIAGO. It could happen, you never know. It'd certainly be pretty, though.

BARTOLA. Very pretty.

SANTIAGO. What was I saying? Ah, yes, having fun together. It'd be an absolute novelty. You can't imagine how much my wife and I get bored.

RAMÍREZ. I can imagine, but my experience tells me that it'd be wiser not to count her in. I don't think it's a good idea. Without distractions, you can get bored for longer and better all by yourself.

SANTIAGO. I don't think so. Have you ever lived with another person? Do you know anything more boring? I'm going to convince her.

BARTOLA. *To SANTIAGO.* What are you saying? I'm boring? You're boring. Climb down right now. You're gonna get it! What are you doing up there? What's going on here? That's not where you are supposed to be. Something must have happened. The

one day that I'm late... *To RAMÍREZ.* What else has he said about me? He always talks trash about me when I'm not around. He's always discrediting me. Tell me what he said.

SANTIAGO. *Going back to his seat.* I'll tell you. Calm down.

BARTOLA. *To RAMÍREZ.* I hope he didn't upset you. I mean, he can be a real pest. He didn't hit you, did he? That's it. He hit you! I bet he hit you! Please, don't report him to the police. He's rather fond of violence, but I assure you he's a good boy. I wouldn't be surprised if one day I got a call to let me know he machine-gunned fifteen people in a park or that he murdered all the children at a school. Poor things. I can see them in a bloodbath, their innards scattered about, the sweet little angels...

SANTIAGO. Honey, I'm here. There's nothing wrong.

RAMÍREZ. I'll be waiting in my dressing room. *Exits.*

BARTOLA. What do you mean there's nothing wrong? What you said about me wasn't exactly nice. Are you okay? Let me check you out. How could you go up there?

SANTIAGO. Honey, we need to talk.

BARTOLA. Talk?

SANTIAGO. Yes.

BARTOLA. Talk to me?

SANTIAGO. Yes, what's the matter? Talk.

BARTOLA. It's been so long since the last time we talked! Give me a minute. I'm not used to this. You must be stoned! That's it!

SANTIAGO. I'm perfectly fine. You saw I met the Director and he...

BARTOLA. You think that was the director? Maybe he was the janitor. I don't think the director would waste his time talking to you.

SANTIAGO. Of course it was the Director! And you saw he's a man with...

BARTOLA. A man!

SANTIAGO. Yes, a man with everything a man has. And a very approachable man, too.

BARTOLA. Yes, right but, how does it feel being up there?

SANTIAGO. Nothing.

BARTOLA. It's impossible to get an interesting word out of you! I want to know it all. Is it embarrassing?

SANTIAGO. Cut it out! Come on, I have to talk to you in private.

BARTOLA. In private! How important! Is it a secret? You know I love secrets. I can torture my friends with them.

SANTIAGO. Oh, shut up! We must give him an answer! The Director is offering us a future...

BARTOLA. A future! You're making me hot.

SANTIAGO. Don't scare me, dear. Were you here when the Director called me smart?

BARTOLA. Either you're delirious or that man is a complete idiot.

SANTIAGO. But he's a famous man!

BARTOLA. Then it's not that. He must be very smart. So what did you do?

SANTIAGO. I? I was thinking of you.

BARTOLA. You've got an amazing talent to ruin everything.

SANTIAGO. It must be love.

BARTOLA. Why is it that when there's nothing to be said people talk about love?

SANTIAGO. Please, don't start philosophizing.

BARTOLA. That's true. I'm too much of a philosopher for you. How terrible it is to live in your darkness. Although being a simple man like you may be a good thing. My lucidity gives me too much suffering. Living with you is nothing but a waste of time.

SANTIAGO. Are you serious?

BARTOLA. Do you think I feel like joking? Should I remind you we've been married for a long time?

SANTIAGO. I get so moved when you flatter me, just like the first day. So, what shall we do? Should we join the Director?

BARTOLA. Can't you see he wants something from you? And first, I would have to stop by the beauty salon.

SANTIAGO. He swears it'll be the most boring thing ever known to man.

BARTOLA. Finally someone with a little bit of creativity. I'm dying to know a genius. The truth is for now...

SANTIAGO. He doesn't want you to join us.

BARTOLA. He doesn't? Well, he obviously doesn't know me! Can't he sense me? Well, since he saw you he must assume that I'm like you. That's what I get for going places with you. How could I get so low? It's over between us. And I can't forgive you for calling me boring in front of all these people. You called me boring! Me!

SANTIAGO. I didn't!

BARTOLA. Yes, you did! Do you think I'm deaf or an idiot? Will you deny it? *To the audience.* You all heard him. Did he or did he not call me boring?

SANTIAGO. I was talking about something else.

BARTOLA. What do you mean something else? You know, you are boring. Just what I needed to hear: that I'm boring. And what happened last night, like every night? What happened? Tell me.

SANTIAGO. Nothing.

BARTOLA. Oh, nothing? Do you think that's nice? Don't you see anything wrong with falling asleep while we're...

SANTIAGO. Shut up...

BARTOLA. I won't shut up. *To the audience.* Yes, we were doing that, you know, and he fell asleep on top of me. Do you think that's nice? And then he goes and says that I'm the boring one...

SANTIAGO. Shut up, please. It's enough, dear. The audience doesn't need to...

BARTOLA. Right. Now he's all "dear" and "shut up". Come on, deny it! Deny it if you're a man. I dare you. Tell all these people you didn't...

SANTIAGO. Well, it wasn't exactly like that. I thought we had finished...

BARTOLA. That's even worse! What is it? You don't even know when...?

SANTIAGO. Honey, please, enough! We'll talk about it later. I was very tired.

BARTOLA. Very tired. You're always tired. That's the problem. *To the audience.* He was born tired.

SANTIAGO. They already know. I don't think these people are interested in our private life...

BARTOLA. Oh, so we have a private life?

SANTIAGO. Come on, we must give him an answer. I want to propose a plan.

BARTOLA. A plan! Which football match do you want to watch?

SANTIAGO. It's got nothing to do with that.

BARTOLA. I don't remember you suggesting any other plan during our whole marriage. *To the audience.* He never wants to go out. He's always home watching T.V. If we miss a program, it's a big tragedy... I, on the other hand, like to dress up, go out with other couples, go to dinner, play poker... in short, see the world. But that's impossible with him. And now I'm the boring one.

SANTIAGO. *To BARTOLA.* And who has to put up with your mother? *To the audience.* I do. I have to put up with her. Every day. In her robe and slippers. And she smells. She doesn't wash up. She says it's a useless expense... *To BARTOLA.* Go with whomever you want and leave me alone...

BARTOLA. *To SANTIAGO.* You know what? Fine, I'll leave right now. I'll divorce you and that's it. *To the audience, trying to leave.* Let me out. I'm out of here.

SANTIAGO. *To BARTOLA.* But take your mother with you. You've got a lot of nerve and you're likely to divorce me and leave your mother as a memento. That's what you want, by the way. I know you.

BARTOLA. Don't use that tone with me.

SANTIAGO. I'll use whatever tone I want. *To the audience.* If we don't ever go out it's because we can't leave her mother alone. You know what? I'll put her in a home tomorrow.

BARTOLA. *To the audience.* He's the one who'll get put in a home. He's an old man. He'd like to be as young as my mother. *To SANTIAGO.* You talk about smells. And what about your bad breath? And your rheum, and your boogers? *To the audience.* He's very generous with his secretions, to put it politely. *To SANTIAGO.* Because, you see, I'm truly polite. *To the audience.* He gets worse year after year, and I have to put up with it. I! And what for? For this... to be treated like this!

SANTIAGO. Forget me! And, just so you know, my secretion abundance is directly related to my emotional unhappiness. That's what my psychologist says.

BARTOLA. I'll be glad to forget you. I'll do it right now. I'm out of here! *Walks towards the exit through the audience.* *To the audience.* You're all witnesses. The one day that I managed to come to the theatre and he can't get over it. Look what he's done just to punish me.

SANTIAGO. Oh, so it was me who started it?

BARTOLA. Of course you did. *To the audience.* Say who started it. Come on, those of you who think he started it remain seated; those of you who think it was me stand up... Your participation will automatically put your name in the raffle to win a T.V. set... *To SANTIAGO.* See what the audience thinks? But I don't care. It's over! I'm done quarreling. I'm getting a divorce at the nearest on-duty court. Goodbye. *Exits and returns.* It's locked! Unlock the doors! Who's got the key?