

# The Voice Of Silence

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*English version by the author revised by Fernanda Sampaio*

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This play was written for specially for the schools participating in the  
**Conexões Youth Theatre Project Brazil**  
and it was part of its portfolio in 2014.  
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be negotiated with the writer's agent.

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Realização



*Omitting is collaborating with the oppressor.*

### **Introduction to the Introduction**

Directors, read this to your actors, sons and daughters. Actors, read this to your parents, brothers and sisters. Actors and directors, read this to your audiences, make them see it, or make them read it by themselves.

Let this message leave my heart and enter yours.

### **Introduction**

The objective of this entire work may be summarized in one word: to awaken.

The truth is a fragile artifact, complex, and, in the vast majority of cases, hard to make out, even as it stands right before our eyes. On top of that, as if it wasn't a hard enough trial to overcome, only a few of us have the courage and the wit required to admit the truth, or to awaken to it, survived. Nonetheless, this is a fundamental step for the emancipation of man, both as individual and in society.

What occurs is that generally an emancipated man, and consequently an emancipated society, hardly follows its government's interests. This is even less so in the case of a government such as the one running Brazil today, whose interests call for the exploitation of its people. That brings forward a word that is key not only in the context of this work, but also in modern vocabulary: manipulation.

This solution, found by the state to keep its people under control, is mainly being focused on the youth, those individuals who will define the paths of the nation.

It is of extreme importance for a government to keep its people consuming, fanatic and alienated. The easiest and fastest way to do that is to direct the interests of the youth towards those purposes, directing their attention to anything that doesn't make a difference, that changes nothing, that only distracts. Never have Rousseau's words proved to be so concrete. A teen today is much more likely to consider the economic value of an idea, of a phenomenon, of an object than its intellectual value or artistic value. Currently, it's hard to find a boy or girl around 17 years of age who will sacrifice him or herself not only by studying, but also by working in order to earn a miserable salary and help their parents with the house expenses or to save up for a decent university. Nevertheless, there are thousands who put aside countless months of hard work to buy a piece of jewelry, a brand shirt or some electronic trinket and parade among their peers, in the illusion that it will aggrandize them and make them better than others. Such illusion is spread in literature, TV shows and even music – if one could call it that.

All of this contributes to the formation of a deceived youth that only lives for the moment, who will grow to be a deceived society that only lives for the moment, a society that pursues and only finds satisfaction in whatever can provide immediate comfort, or a supposed immediate "happiness", a vulgar society, unconscious of itself and of the motives that permeate each and every one of its actions and the problems it suffers. One of the oldest techniques of control used by the State, panem et circenses, has its efficiency affirmed. Of course, it is worthy of note that these characteristics, though evident in Brazil's political and sociological context, may not be as apparent or as serious in different contexts, although I believe most of them can be seen in varying scales in every community and nation.

I don't have any intention here to act as would Nietzsche's demon and claim that our actions must be pondered since they will, as will our lives, repeat themselves eternally.

The point is to declare how much the conditioning of thought or of action towards the attainment of immediate comfort and satisfaction is the easiest way to speed up the process of alienation and detachment from emancipation, thus leading to submission to State manipulation and that of any external influence. The answer to that will not be found through riots, with people walking down avenues, holding signs and interrupting traffic. The answer lies within the reflection of each individual and in the conscious, justified actions of all.

For too long has society corrupted the youth, its strongest source of hope for the future. For too long have the tyrants ruled. It is time we let our rage and our liberty overcome our fear. Therefore, those who are young in body, in soul or in both: search for the truth.

Admit the truth.

And awaken.

Awaken.

### **Characters\***

#### **Alexandre Furtado Xavier**

*an aspiring journalist, Alex is a mute and very introspective teenager*

#### **Alex's Voice**

*in certain scenes, Alex's thought will be represented by a voice that may come from the green room or be reproduced through some kind of sound equipment. The actor emitting the voice may or may not appear*

#### **Daniela de Alvarenga Peixoto**

*a girl whose conversations with other girls during class allowed her to develop lip reading skills, which makes her the only one who understands Alex without him having to make any gesture.*

**Gabriel da Silva e Oliveira**

*another teenager, Daniela's neighbor. Very expressive and bossy, though deep down he is actually a coward.*

**Felipe de Abreu Vieira**

*a younger nerd who admires Alexander. He likes to spy on other peoples' secrets through his IT skills.*

**Angélica de Abreu Vieira**

*Felipe's younger sister, a very shy girl, though she may act in a hyperactive way sometimes.*

Alex's "Mother" or "Father"/Agent of the System

*both characters must be played by the same actor/actress\*\**

**Felipe's Mother**

*a traditional housekeeper. She treats her children as if they were her pets.*

**Daniela's Sister**

*a girl closer to Alex's age, of a rebellious nature, will always be seen watching TV.*

The Henchmen of the System

*there's no determined maximum or minimum number of Henchmen.*

*They must wear a hood or something that partially/completely*

*hides their faces and preferably dark costumes.*

*They may be played by any actor as long as none of them resemble any other character.*

\* Characters' names, although the middle and surnames have historical relevance in Brazil, are merely suggestive. Common names from the respective countries would be more appropriate.

\*\* The fact that the Alex's "Mother" or "Father"/Agent of the System character is played by the same actor/ actress does not necessarily imply that they are, in fact, the same

person. It will depend on the group's interpretation, and on the message the group wishes to transmit, whether they are indeed the same.

### **The Victims of the System**

*a young boy/girl who will be captured by the Henchmen.*

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#### **Scene 1**

*Alexandre is sitting at one corner of the stage, in front of a desk with a blank sheet of paper. He looks thoughtful, as though preparing to write something down.*

Alex's Voice – Now, let me begin my story. A story that must convince everyone of the truth they face every day, though they don't want to admit it. Perhaps because they're afraid. Perhaps because it hurts. But it must be seen, and everyone must have the courage to shout it out to those who don't want to listen until the moment when just believing it won't be enough. Such irony... I have the courage but can't shout.

Alex's "Mother" or "Father (*off stage*) – Xavier, someone's here to see you.

Alex – (*rises slowly and leaves the room, closing the door behind him. Walks down the stairs to find Daniela waiting for him*)

Dani – Hey Alex! Everything okay? Anything interesting going on here lately?

Alex – (*just moves his lips*)

Dani – Slow down a bit... (*Dani struggles to read his lips*)

Alex – (*Makes wide and exaggerated movements to help her*)

Dani – I haven't been doing much either. Just hanging around with the folks sometimes. My parents don't like me going out too much. Things have been kind

of gloomy, you know, the missing people and all... They won't get off my back.

Alex – *(pretends to be surprised, very sarcastically, then smiles)*

Dani – How's your new report? Keeping you busy?

Alex – (He widens his eyes and nods emphatically, confirming the “busy” part)

Dani – You and your Rebel stories. I'm just waiting to read something about them on the papers.

Alex – (Simply stares at her and attempts a faint smile)

Dani – Gabriel wants to have another one of his “meetings”. As if all the stuff he posts on his blog weren't enough...

Alex – (Snorts in contempt towards Gabriel's blog)

Dani – Different from you who can't, he is happy enough just telling others he's going to do something... *(laughs)*

Alex – *(smiles at her in an extremely ironic way, as if almost laughing to mock what she has said)*

Dani – Seriously though, let's get out or Gabriel will start bitching we didn't get there on time.

*The two move toward the back door. As he walks away, Alex looks back straight at his “Mother/Father” and nods, in a cold farewell gesture.*

## Scene 2

*The five friends meet around a derelict playground. The streets are empty and a few people are still walking outside their homes.*

Gabriel *(ironically)* – Here they come, bacon and eggs have arrived... Good, things were a bit quiet around here.

Dani *(to Gabriel)* – Funny as always.

Felipe – Hello Alex! How are you doing pal?

Alex – *(smiles and greets Felipe. Then turns to face Angelica and pats her on the head, as if she was a little kid. She shrugs and shakes her head)*

Angélica – Stop it, Alex, you’re not my father. Hey Dani!

*Angelica kisses Daniela on the cheek. Meanwhile,*

*Gabriel and Alex cross stares before Alex reaches his hand out to shake Gabriel’s)*

Gabriel – Long time no see handsome... Still working on that pseudo-journalist stuff of yours?

Alex – *(ironic smile)*

Gabriel – When you finish the new Communist Manifesto just remember to tell me. *(turning to the rest of the group)* Time to plan our weekly prank against those morons from the System. Any ideas?

Felipe *(thrilled and anxious)* – Let’s spread bombs around town to catch any System wacko who’s not paying attention.

Dani *(raining on Felipe’s parade)* – No, Felipe, we’ve already been through the bombs idea. What if a distracted citizen walks over one?

Felipe – Nobody walks around here anymore, everybody’s at home. Not even my mother goes out, only for groceries once a month at the most.

Dani – Still, it’s dangerous.

Angélica – I bet you’d forget where you’ve put them and be the first to go airborne!  
*(laughs)*

*Everyone laughs. Felipe forces a laugh, sarcastically.*

Felipe *(getting anxious again)* – It’s obvious I would put a GPS tracker on them not to forget.

Gabriel *(also killing Felipe’s joy)* – We said no Felipe. You wouldn’t even be able to

buy the equipment you need to make that many bombs. And your mother's not going to find that at the grocery, right?

*Felipe puts his head down and moves next to Alex.*

Felipe – I could make homemade bombs... That would be cool, wouldn't it Alex?

Alex – *(pats Felipe's back and smiles while making an affirmative gesture)*

Angélica – We could make some simpler traps... Something with, I don't know, gas maybe... To see if we can drive them away.

Dani – That could really work.

Gabriel – I don't like the idea of hitting them too hard, more people have disappeared in every neighborhood they've been to so far... That can't be a coincidence.

Dani – They even control the TV now with that broadcasting station they built nearby.

Gabriel – Any thoughts on this Alex? You're a bit quiet today. *(laughs)*

Alex – *(faces Gabriel and makes a sarcastic smile)*

Felipe – I've heard they take people to sort of brain wash them. Maybe that's what they're planning, and that won't change their minds never to come back.

Gabriel – We could pay a visit to the other condos and ask what they think is going on. You would make a good interviewer, Alex. But I'll ask the questions.

Alex – *(turns to Daniela and moves his lips)*

Dani *(holding a laugh)* – Yeah, I know.

Gabriel – What did he say?

Dani – He said it's useless for you to plan all of that only to post it in your blog and not do anything else about it. For someone as rebellious as you say you are you spend a lot of time at your computer.

Gabriel – Listen, all my followers admire me. I could make a revolution anytime I

wanted to... By the way, I liked those phrases you wrote on the blog, Angelica.

Angélica (*sounding innocent*) – Thanks!

Felipe – I do something useful with my computer. I almost hacked my neighbor’s PC yesterday.

Gabriel – You were trying to watch other things from your neighbor’s, that’s all...

*Gabriel starts laughing by himself.*

Alex (at Gabriel) – Shah!

*Alex slaps Gabriel’s shoulder, who scowls. Everybody laughs.*

Dani (*trying not to hold her laugh*) – Thanks for keeping the conversation at a decent level, Alex.

Angélica – It’s not a good idea to stay here too long. We can plan this week’s “attack” some other time.

Alex – (*points to Angelica and nods to show he agrees*)

Gabriel (*looking at Alex*) – Killjoy... We’ll gather here again another day to talk some more.

Felipe – I’m going to look around for some good spots to plant bombs. You know, as failsafe... Are you coming Angelica?

Angélica (*looking bored*) – Do I look like I have anything better to do.

*Alex “tells” Dani something.*

Dani – Felipe’s the ultimate nerd, I’m sure he knows about plenty of empty alleys where he can hide.

Gabriel – Hey! Aren’t you guys forgetting a detail?

*The group holds their hands together and then throws them in the air, shouting.*

All – SAUSAGE!\*

*The group scatters and each one walks to their respective homes while Felipe*

*and Angelica start analyzing the area for suitable bombs or trap locations.*

\* The “Sausage” shout/war cry has a specific and emotional meaning related to the Grupo de Teatro do CSL (Colégio São Luís Theatre Group) that formed during the 2008 and 2009 editions of the projeto Conexões, and of which I was a part. Any other shout/war cry that expresses your respective group’s harmony and connection may be used in its place.

### **Scene 3**

*Felipe’s home. Felipe’s Mother washing the dishes at the kitchen.*

*The apartment is as silent as the rest of the building, until Felipe’s Mother hears someone knocking on her door. She readily answers.*

Felipe’s Mother – Good afternoon! How may I help you?

Henchman – Good afternoon. I’m making a research about political subjects in the neighborhood. May I come in for a few minutes, to ask a few questions?

Felipe’s Mother (*a bit reluctant*) – Ehh... Sure, why not. Come in please. Can I get you anything?

Henchman – I’m fine ma’am, don’t worry, this won’t take much.

*They sit down. Felipe’s Mother continues unsettled.*

Henchman – First of all, would you consider yourself a political activist?

Felipe’s Mother – No, definitely not. I don’t like getting involved with that kind of thing.

Henchman – I see. So you could say you don’t mind much about the parties competing for power today, is that right?

Felipe’s Mother – Of course things used to be a lot easier with a more flexible party in control, but I can’t complain.

Henchman – So you don't sympathize much with the System, is that it?

*Felipe's Mother gets increasingly nervous and stutters to answer.*

Felipe's Mother – No, no, that's not what I meant to say. I... I don't have anything against the System, of course not. I just don't have anything in its favor either...

That is, it's indifferent to me.

*She displays an insecure and nervous smile, noticing she hasn't been successful in correcting her mistake. The Henchman acts naturally.*

Henchman – That'll be just fine ma'am, I have everything I need right here.

*The Henchman stands up and starts walking away. Felipe's Mother stands in a bolt, still looking nervous and frightened, and still stuttering.*

Felipe's Mother – Wait a second. Umm... Are you sure that's all you want? You really wouldn't like me to write a statement, a suggestion, perhaps even a compliment?

*She insecurely smiles again seeing she's only making her situation worse.*

*The Henchman still acts naturally as they both move towards the exit.*

Henchman – Don't fret ma'am. As I said, they're nothing but simple questions. I have everything I need.

Felipe's Mother – Alright then...

Henchman – May I only ask you to sign this document?

*The Henchman hands her a pen and a clipboard with a few pages. As she bends to sign,*

*he pulls a syringe from his pocket and injects a substance in her neck. Immediately*

*Felipe's Mother falls unconscious. The Henchman keeps her from hitting the ground and calls for the Other Henchman that was waiting outside to help him carry her.*

#### **Scene 4**

*The stage is dark, two chairs are positioned facing each other at a considerable distance*

*and there is one light focused on the chair on which Felipe's Mother is seating with a shawl, hood or some rag over her head semi-conscious. The two Henchmen stand on each side of the other chair. The System's Agent enters holding a sheet of paper.*

System's Agent – Take it off.

*One of the Henchmen removes whatever's covering Felipe's Mother's head.*

*She slowly starts to open her eyes and become aware of the situation.*

*The System's Agent sits between the Henchmen.*

Felipe's Mother – Where... Where am I?

System's Agent – Don't worry ma'am, you're safe and sound. We just need to have a little chat. How are you feeling?

Felipe's Mother (*still a bit disoriented*) – A little dizzy.

System's Agent – That's normal, soon you'll be feeling better. Very well, you are acquainted with the political party known as the System, aren't you?

Felipe's Mother – I'm not sure "acquainted" would be a good term in this case, but I would have to live in a cave or something not to know about it.

System's Agent – Of course. Nevertheless, I find it hard to believe that you have any knowledge of the origins or the principles that guide this organization, am I right?

Felipe's Mother – To tell you the truth, I've never been very curious about it.

System's Agent – The System was born as a private security organization hired by the government to protect "key-elements" in urban areas.

Henchman – In the beginning it was simple work. But as our water reservoirs began to dry and the agricultural production fell abruptly with the climate changes, the lower classes lost access to supplies.

Other Henchman – That increased significantly the violence and criminal rates.

What began as small bursts of violence quickly turned into a national security

problem. The cost of these services rose at a fast pace, as did the government's debts. Until it ran out of money.

Other Henchman – The organization offered the government a solution: the debt would be considered paid if the power to implement administrative changes and measures in the government was transferred to an executive member of the organization. It was either that, or they could watch the society destroy itself.

Other Henchman – That executive member would be responsible for the execution of a new administrative “System”. The name stuck.

System's Agent – Within a few months, we were in control of all security, followed by the media. Within a year we controlled the distribution of supplies, and today, everything. You are lucky your neighborhood is between those less affected by the population's reactions.

*Felipe's Mother covers her mouth with her hand, astonished by the information she just received. Her face doesn't lose its frightened expression.*

Felipe's Mother – How did this happen so quickly?

System's Agent – We obviously shortened the story, but drastic changes require quick actions.

*Felipe's Mother remains speechless for a moment.*

Felipe's Mother – This happened right under my and everyone's noses and no one said a word?

System's Agent – Governments hide all kinds of information from their people. It's difficult for society to understand that it is the source of its own problems. People don't want to admit or even accept the truth.

*Another pause. Felipe's Mother still has a hard time finding words.*

System's Agent – But you don't have to worry about anything ma'am. Our only

objective is to guarantee the security of our contributors and supporters.

Felipe's Mother – Indeed, if I haven't suffered any kind of violence or gone through any shortage. That means I'm actually safe.

System's Agent – Of course you are! That's another reason why our System is so beneficial for its citizens!

Felipe's Mother – And I have supplies, my TV and radio are working.

System's Agent – All of that, of course, a courtesy of the System!

Felipe's Mother – It looks like this thing actually works, and very well indeed!

System's Agent – Couldn't be any better, could it?

Felipe's Mother – Now I don't see why I was so afraid of going out.

System's Agent – That's completely understandable ma'am, but now you can go on with the conviction that the System will always be there to protect you!

Felipe's Mother – But you must admit this sounds really odd... Like some sort of manipulation. All this time I haven't been charged any taxes, no additional fee.

How does that work exactly?

*The Agent fakes a smile and rests his hand on Felipe's Mother's shoulder.*

System's Agent (*with a grin*) – You must have gotten the wrong message from our principles. We're not some cable TV company. All we profit from and ask for is your loyalty.

Felipe's Mother – What do you mean with "my loyalty"?

System's Agent – We just ask you to keep on buying groceries, clothes, talking about us, supporting our ideals, and obviously, enjoying the benefits that make a citizen from the System so much better!

Felipe's Mother – Looks too good to be true...

System's Agent – We can assure you it is.

*With his hand over her shoulder, the Agent starts guiding*

*Felipe's Mother towards the exit.*

Felipe's Mother – This makes me feel at ease. I'm eager to tell my kids all about it!

System's Agent – Tell them everything! I'm positive you'll make them see how truly great the System is!

*Still resting his hand over her shoulder, the Agent signals one of the Henchmen, who then approaches Felipe's Mother with a syringe and again injects a substance in her neck. The three hold her before she hits the ground and carry her out.*

## **Scene 5**

*Daniela arrives at her apartment. Her sister is watching TV as she does most of the time and doesn't like to be interrupted.*

Dani – Do you know if mom...

Daniela's Sister – Shut up.

Dani – I'm just asking if you know...

Daniela's Sister – Shut up.

Dani – Could you stop being such a pain and...

Daniela's Sister – Shut up!!

*Daniela starts screaming, a scream that's only overcome by her sister's scream. They both continue comparing their vocal capacities until Daniela loses her temper and runs to her room. Meanwhile, Gabriel is getting to his apartment and walks to his room which is adjacent to Daniela's. The two of them sit at their computers.*

Gabriel (*screaming*) – Dani!! Have you seen what I posted on my blog?

Dani – Damn it Gabriel, there's the thinnest wall between us!

Gabriel – Right, right, but take a look.

*Daniela reads Gabriel's last posts at his blog.*

Dani – Let's see here... Angelica's saying a load of bullshit... Got it – “Gabriel: We won't take it anymore! We must face the System! Fight for your freedom!” That's cute; another rebellious burst that only results in throwing wet toilet paper on the System's base window.

*Daniela gets angry, stands up, leaves her apartment and crosses the hall to knock on Gabriel's apartment door.*

Gabriel (*opening the door*) – What is it Dani?

Dani – You keep on making jokes like that just to provoke those guys from the System and do nothing later, and you still think they'll be nice to you?

Gabriel (*with a sarcastic tone*) – Ha, who says I'm doing nothing later?

Dani – Then what is it you plan to do?

Gabriel – Well... I'm not sure yet... We could plug off the generators of the broadcasting station, I don't know.

Dani – Then if you're lucky enough not to electrocute yourself with that, you'll end up having to explain what you're doing there to some System Henchman.

Gabriel – They wouldn't be that smart.

Dani – Have you lost your mind? People have gone missing in every single region they've been to, now you'll tell me that's coincidence? They've already been to my place to fix the TV because it wasn't connected to their station. I wouldn't be surprised if they weren't listening to us talking right now.

Gabriel (*approaching Daniela*) – Want to go somewhere more... private?

Dani (*pushing Gabriel away*) – Shut up, I'm serious about this.

Gabriel – What do you suggest then? Write tales the way Alex does?

Dani – You listen to me. Alex goes out and investigates people. He watches and

writes serious things. It's nothing like that useless teasing you do.

Gabriel – Sure, sure... Alex is a frustrated guy who makes up those fairy tales to try and make up for what he can't say.

Dani – He doesn't write fairy tales. He leaves that to you. Even without a voice, he says a lot more than you, who talks for two people.

*They sit down, tired of arguing. A long silence takes place and involves them.*

Dani – I don't know Gabriel, things haven't been easy lately.

Gabriel – They're not easy for anyone Dani.

Dani – Maybe that's the way it's supposed to be. We all must be manipulated. Maybe we just don't want to admit that, so we stay quiet. Maybe it's just easier that way.

Gabriel – Great, here we go with that nonsense again.

Dani (*laughing*) – Yeah, I think it's better for me to shut up this time.

Gabriel – Things will get better, I know it. I have a hunch.

Dani – Wow and here was I thinking I'm the one with the hunches.

Gabriel (*laughing as well*) – No, I also have those. They're just not that frequent.

Dani – Got it. Well, I'm tired. I'll see if my sister doesn't bother me that much and lets me get some sleep.

Gabriel – In case she doesn't, I'll always have a bed.

Dani – Gabriel, no.

Gabriel –... for you! I was saying I'd sleep on the couch.

Dani – Of course you were.

*Daniela returns to her apartment. Her sister is still watching TV; nonetheless, she tries to rest in her room.*

## Scene 6

*Two the System's Henchmen are taking Felipe's Mother back home. They place her at the door as if nothing had ever happened to her. The Other Henchman leaves while the Henchman takes and holds his clipboard and tries to wake up Felipe's Mother.*

Henchman – Ma'am? Are you alright? Hello?

*Felipe's Mother begins to regain consciousness and realizes where she is as she stands up.*

Felipe's Mother (*still a bit disoriented*) – What... What's just happened? Who are you?

What are you doing here?

Henchman – Don't you remember? I came by to ask a few questions and was just leaving when I asked you to sign a document, then you passed out.

Felipe's Mother – Oh, right, I remember you. Did I sign the document after all?

Henchman – Yes you did. Are you feeling alright, ma'am?

Felipe's Mother – Yes, don't worry, I'm just a little dizzy.

Henchman – If that's the case, I'll be on my way. Have a good afternoon!

Felipe's Mother – Same to you.

*She stands still for a moment, trying to figure out what actually went on, looking from one side to the other.*

Felipe's Mother – Strange...

*After a while, she shrugs and resumes her activities inside the apartment.*

*Felipe and Angélica arrive after exploring the surroundings for possible bombs and trap installations. Both of them cross stares with the Henchman before getting home and feel very uncomfortable about the strangers.*

Felipe – Mom?

Angélica – Is everything alright?

Felipe's Mother – Everything's alright darling!

Felipe – Have you seen that guy at the hallway?

Felipe’s Mother – What about him?

Felipe – He had a very suspicious look and weird clothes. He looked like someone from the System. You didn’t talk to him, did you?

Felipe’s Mother – Yes I did, what’s wrong with that?

Felipe – What do you mean? What if he’s actually from the System? These people are dangerous, if they were here in the condo, nothing good can come out of it.

Felipe’s Mother – Dangerous? Don’t be ridiculous. He was just asking a few questions, I don’t see any danger in that.

Angélica – Are you crazy?

Felipe’s Mother – I don’t know what you are talking about.

Felipe – Mom, every neighborhood they have built a base on has had many missing people reports in the last days.

Felipe’s Mother – Honey, people go missing sometimes.

Angélica – Not three people from the same block within a week mom!

Felipe’s Mother – Maybe they didn’t like the System and left. Though I don’t understand why anyone would do that. The System offers so many benefits.

Felipe (*facing Angélica and whispering*) – What has she been eating lately?

Angélica (*whispering back*) – I don’t know, the same we have.

Felipe’s Mother – For example, they offer us TV, they opened a grocery store right next to us and even guarantee our security on the streets.

Felipe – Of course, their channels, their products and their rules.

Felipe’s Mother – Isn’t that nice? We have everything we need here, with quality and comfort!

Angélica (*whispering again to Felipe*) – She’s gone insane.

Felipe – Okay, for real now, mom. Who was that guy leaving the condo?

Felipe’s Mother – He was nobody, Felipe. He came here, asked a few questions and left. Now, stop being silly and get yourself something useful to do.

Felipe – You bet I’ll do something useful.

*Felipe runs to his room. For a moment Angélica stares at her mother before she goes back to her chores, and then follows Felipe.*

### **Scene 7**

*Alex is again in his room, sitting, writing.*

Alex’s Voice – This is good... The story is coming out well. Soon they’ll all see what’s going on right under their noses. I just have to be faster. That way I don’t have to convince them one by one. That way everyone who knows will be on my side...

*Knocks on the door interrupt Alex’s concentration.*

Alex’s “Mother” or “Father – Xavier?

*Alex ignores and tries to continue writing.*

Alex’s “Mother” or “Father – Xavier?

*Alex hits the desk with his hand.*

Alex’s “Mother” or “Father – A friend of yours is waiting for you.

*Alex stands up and, as he turns around to store his material,*

*Daniela sneaks behinds his back and stands really close to him.*

*When he turns around he’s startled by her standing there so close.*

Dani – Hi!

*Alex recovers from the scare, then looks at Daniela and smiles.*

*She tries to peek over his shoulder to spy on what he has been writing.*

Dani – Is the story working out?

Alex – *(shakes his head and moves in front of her to block her sight and keep her from seeing what he was writing)*

Dani – I hope it is. Though I bet many newspapers will want your story anyways.

Unless someone from the System gets to it first, of course. Then they'll find a way for no one to believe you. Are the investigations interesting?

Alex – *(Shrugs and starts walking down the hallway, thoughtful. Then twists his hands repeatedly displaying a “sort of” gesture and starts moving lips so that Daniela understands what he means)*

Dani – What do you mean everyone's just repeating how much they like the System?

That's weird. But you discovered enough information, haven't you? Can't I read just a little?

*Daniela walks toward the room, but Alex stands on the way trying to convince her otherwise.*

Alex – *(gestures for her to stay calm and keeps moving his lips looking at her)*

Dani *(moving away from the door)* – Oh... You want to make it more “convincing”, is that it? Alright then. I hope you manage to do that, because Gabriel is itching to make another one of those meetings.

Alex – *(rubs his face with his hand showing contempt and rolls his eyes up to indicate impatience. But after that signals pointing the exit)*

Dani – Let's go then...

*They leave.*

## Scene 8

*The group reunites once more at the derelict playground. Felipe and Angélica wait for Alex and Daniela. They greet each other.*

Dani – Well, precisely the one who was most interested in this meeting happening hasn't showed up yet? That's odd.

Angélica – Actually, we were here wondering the same th...

*Angélica barely finishes the sentence, Gabriel runs in and interrupts her,*

Gabriel – Hey guys, you won't believe what just happened.

*All stare at Gabriel with astonished and curious faces.*

Felipe – Say it!

Dani – Spill it out!

Gabriel (*very angry and emphatically*) – I just went to the grocery to buy some turkey and potatoes for my mother, and there I saw that the potatoes' price went up two bucks from yesterday! How's that possible? These System bastards.

Angélica – Why didn't you go buy potatoes somewhere else that's not sold to the System?

Gabriel – Are you mad? The potatoes that are not brought in by the System either look and taste horrible or are probably poisoned...

*They stare at each other in disappointment.*

Dani – What did you do then?

Gabriel – I complained to the manager. But all he said was "You want to complain, kid? Don't waste my time, that's the System's supervisor problem. He's around here somewhere. Go try him out hotshot!"

Felipe – Did you find the supervisor?

Gabriel – I've got no idea where the bastard was. There was no point in wasting my time with it either, wouldn't work anyways.

Dani – So you just left it that way?

Gabriel – Of course not! I wrote everything down on my blog as soon as I got

home. Now everyone will know how they sabotaged the potatoes.

*The group sighs in deeper disappointment. Alex slaps his own face.*

Dani (*sarcastically*) – That’s great, Gabriel. Now they will be so offended they might even cut your internet or keep you from buying potatoes.

Gabriel (*with ironic tone*) – At least I don’t stay in my room making up stories, do I, Alex?

*Alex stares at Gabriel with no expression and ignores the comment)*

Angélica – Don’t be mean to him.

Gabriel – I was just joking.

Felipe – We should plan something a lot more serious this time. Not only to piss them off, but to make them lose control and expose themselves. After all, the situation is getting ugly. Even my mother started acting weird now.

*Alex gets curious and pulls Daniela to his side. Everyone turns their faces to Felipe and Daniela watches Alex closely in order to “read” him.*

Dani (*to Felipe*) – He asked how that happened.

Felipe – I didn’t get it much. My mother has never been a fan of the System, and then, all of a sudden, she started bragging about how everything they do is good for us and how we should thank them.

Angélica – All of that after some guys came to our condo and “asked” her a bunch of questions.

*Alex gets agitated and moves near Angélica.*

Alex – (*gestures a “What?” that requires no translation*)

Angélica – A couple of guys were leaving when we arrived home. They didn’t look familiar... or friendly.

Dani – What’s up, Alex. Do you know anything?

*Alex turns to Daniela and moves his lips exaggeratedly.*

Dani – All the people he’s investigated so far have had some behavior changes after going through this sort of “interview”.

Gabriel (*interrupting*) – How does he investigate people? He can’t speak!

*All of them frown and stare at Gabriel, who makes a puzzled face.*

Alex – (*gestures also staring at Gabriel*)

*Daniela for some reason knows what Alex means.*

Dani – He can’t speak, but he listens very well!

*The looks turn back to Alex, who continues “talking” to Daniela.*

Dani – He didn’t think that meant anything relevant since most people were used to the System. But he’s never seen your mother praising the system.

Felipe – Neither have I, which is why it was weird. That kind of stuff never made much of a difference for her, but to go around praising things is nothing like her.

Dani – Maybe that helps the story Alex is writing, though the statement from a few citizens doesn’t change things much. We need something dirty about them.

Angélica – We could look around the station. Maybe they’ve got something hidden there.

Gabriel – That’s my idea! I’m the one who suggested cutting off the energy of the broadcasting station. You remember that, don’t you, Dani?

Dani – No one’s talking about cutting their energy. We want the information they have there, not to lose all the information.

*Alex continues gesturing at Daniela.*

Dani – Felipe, you may be able to break into the computers at the station. Or the ones from the base – they must have a lot of dirt in them. What do you say?

Felipe – I can try. I’m glad I’ve already built some small bombs in case they catch me, right?

Dani – I suppose that’s a good plan for our next days then. We’re counting on you, Felipe.

*Alex looks at him and makes a “positive” sign of encouragement.*

Felipe – How comforting.

Angélica – Don’t worry, I’ll help.

Gabriel (*starts whispering*) – I don’t mean to interrupt the mutiny, but it’s getting dark and I can hear someone coming.

Dani (*also whispering*) – Alright. We meet here again in a couple of days.

All (*still whispering*) – Sausage!

*And each runs their own way.*

## Scene 9

*Daniela is getting to her apartment. Daniela’s Sister, as usual, is watching TV completely disconnected.*

Dani – Hey, did hear someone pass by?

Daniela’s Sister – Shut up.

Dani – No, I’m serious now, come on, let me talk to you.

*Daniela sits beside her sister and stares at her.*

Daniela’s Sister (*sighs impatiently*) – Okay, what do you want?

Dani – Have you seen any weird fella around the condo in the last few days?

Daniela’s Sister (*without looking away from the TV*) – No, except for those guys from the System who came over to switch everyone’s cable. You were here, you know it.

Dani – I do. But besides them no one else came by lately?

Daniela’s Sister – I told you already, no one. Why are you asking me so many stupid questions?

Dani – Some strange things have been going on. I mean, stranger than usual. And I’m just trying to find out who’s behind it.

Daniela’s Sister – That would be the System, obviously.

Dani – You think so too?

Daniela’s Sister – I always thought so. Actually, I always knew.

Dani – Why have you never told me before then?

Daniela’s Sister – Why should I tell you? So you can get all crazy, go out cursing the System only to be kidnapped and never come back? Or worse, come back as a vegetable? No, thanks.

Dani – But what exactly do you think of them?

Daniela’s Sister – I think they’re a bunch of assholes who manipulate people as if they were rats in their little lab.

Dani – I didn’t know you hated them so much. Why have you never done anything?

Daniela’s Sister – Me and what army? You think I’m going to join those wackos over there and start walking the streets holding signs (*she points at the TV*)? If holding signs on the streets could change anything we would have a bunch of hobos ruling our country today.

Dani – You could gather more people. Look at Gabriel, he doesn’t have many good ideas but many people read his blog.

Daniela’s Sister (*laughing*) – Gabriel and his blog? If he told any of his readers there was a truck giving away free ice cream there wouldn’t be more than two of them there to get it. They’re all loafers who think they’re the best on the web and such. But when it’s time to take their asses off their chairs, they come up with a million excuses.

Dani – I can’t disagree with that. What do you suggest then?

Daniela's Sister – Wait. You can't do much now. People are stupid. They wouldn't know what's going on even if they were drowning in their own crap. But the truth always shows itself, one way or another.

Dani (*pissed*) – I can't just wait. I'll try to find out as much as I can about this.

Daniela's Sister – Good luck. I'll be here. While I have food and a TV, I'll be fine.

*Daniela stays silent for a moment before running to her room.*

*Her sister remains seated fixated on the TV.*

### **Scene 10**

*Inside the System's regional base, the System's Agent and the Henchmen are going through the latest information and instructions of the next operations.*

*The Agent is holding a sheet of paper.*

System's Agent – Until further notice we will continue our operations in the neighborhood keeping the usual level of discretion.

Henchman – How is the new guide for the conversion of arrested individuals coming along?

System's Agent (*raising the sheet for all to see or placing it on some sort of desk*) – All we have done are a few changes to the old guide. The President is concluding the new one, and is concentrated on making it more "convincing", as he put it.

Other Henchman – What do you expect of him?

System's Agent – He looked confident. He said that project will greatly increase our influence.

Henchman – That's good, it has become tiresome to go door to door convincing each individual.

System's Agent – Speaking of which, I need updates about the progress of last

week's operation.

Other Henchman – Our progress has matched the expectations. The biggest grocery and supplier in town is already under our control.

*The System's Agent starts taking notes on the back of the paper.*

Henchman – And at least 90% of the radio and television broadcasts are being monitored.

Other Henchman – We also control approximately 85% of the press, including printers and local editors.

Henchman – For now.

System's Agent – What about the citizens?

Other Henchman – We have great influence over them I would say. Nearly all apartment complexes have undergone interrogation.

Henchman – The only thing that upsets me are those brats who hang around the park a few blocks from here.

Other Henchman – They're up to something.

System's Agent – Do you think they might offer any danger to the operation?

Henchman – If I'm not mistaken, one of them almost breached our station security.

Other Henchman – I think I know which one. This one: Felipe de Abreu Vieira. I saw him when we visited that woman two days ago. What a prick.

Henchman – Are you sure it's not... Gabriel da Silva e Oliveira, the one who writes a blog or something?

Other Henchman – No, that one's no threat. He does write some "rebellious" content on the blog, but never takes action. It's actually good that he keeps on doing that, it encourages others to do the same. Then in the end everyone stays at home, without bothering us.

Henchman – In any event I doubt they can be any smart. If you ask me they really just talk too much. At least most of them.

*The Other Henchman opens a grin.*

System's Agent – No problem, if our plan keeps advancing, they will soon be nothing to worry about. Do we have any new target?

Other Henchman – I wired an apartment while installing our cable and caught a girl saying many interesting things.

Henchman – She's the sister of one the girls from that little group.

Other Henchman – That Daniela de Alvarenga Peixoto, right? Looks like her sister needs a small change of heart.

System's Agent – Perfect. Subversive behavior won't be tolerated. That seems to me like a good place to start then.

Other Henchman – Something tells me this one will put up a fight.

Henchman – That's okay, we'll bring her here as soon as possible.

*The Henchmen cross stares and then smile again.*

Other Henchman – We'll both go in then, I'm not taking any risk with this one.

System's Agent – You can start immediately. We'll meet again in a couple of days to update the conversion guide. Dismissed.

*All Henchmen follow their way while the System's Agent leaves the opposite way.*

## **Scene 11**

*Alex and Daniela arrive at Felipe's home to plan on how to obtain more information to expose the System. While the three of them talk, Felipe's Mother cleans up the place and Angélica writes at the computer.*

Felipe – Hi Dani! What's up, Alex?

*Dani kisses his cheek and then moves to peek on Angélica.*

Alex – *(simply nods as he shakes Felipe’s hand)*

Dani – Hi to you too, Angelica.

*Angélica, concentrated on the computer mutters something unintelligible. Felipe’s Mother treats all of them as little kids.*

Felipe’s Mother – Hello sweethearts! How are you doing? Would you like some snacks or something?

Felipe *(looking at his mother impatiently)* – Mom, we know where the kitchen is.

Felipe’s Mother – Alright then, just don’t make a mess here, will you?

*They all stare at each other with no expression.*

*Daniela holds a laugh and Felipe sighs as his mother leaves.*

Felipe – Don’t mind her. I thought things would change for me when my sister was born, but it just got worse. Anyways, I’ve been working a lot since our last meeting, so let’s recap before we talk to Gabriel.

Dani – We know the System controls almost everything around here, and now they’re trying to “convert” the people who don’t support it through some kind of brain washing technique. Alex found out this has been going on for quite a while now.

Felipe – We’ll need very concrete information to bring people to our side.

Alex – *(pokes Daniela and starts to gesture and move his lips)*

Dani – He asked if you had any luck invading the station’s computers.

Felipe – I did, but the problem is there was nothing useful there. All I found were schedules for the week’s programming, some political merchandising files and banned shows.

Alex – *(pokes Daniela again and shakes his head affirmatively. Daniela predicts what he*

*wants to say)*

Dani – I know, that might help us a little. But they probably already have an excuse prepared for that. We would need a much stronger impact to wake people up.

Felipe – What’s interesting is I found no information about their base there. The encrypted files among the station’s data resemble a sort of medical treatment record, as if they were conducting some kind of experiment in a facility. The base could be that facility.

Alex – *(stares at Daniela and emphatically moves his lips)*

Dani – I agree, that can’t mean anything good. What (watching Alex)? Is there any other way to get in the base computers?

*Angélica begins laughing uncontrollably. They all stop and look at her, then ignore her and continue talking while she recovers and turns her attention back to the computer.*

Felipe – That would be hard, they must have put everything inside a mainframe inside the base. I would have to be there facing that computer to access the data.

Dani – Looks like there’s no way out. If only we could find some moron from the System and follow him...

Felipe’s Mother – Did I hear something about the System there?

Felipe – What’s the matter mom?

*She looks at the group squeezing her eyes.*

Felipe’s Mother – I hope you’re not up to something there. I don’t want to hear about you getting in trouble.

Felipe – Do you actually believe the System is being good to us mom?

Felipe’s Mother – Darling, it’s not just about believing. They are there showing everyday how much they want what’s best for us. They pick the best products for the groceries, the best shows for the television, and are always concerned

for our safety.

*The group look at each other again, surprised with Felipe's Mother's beliefs.*

*Felipe tries to turn the situation around.*

Felipe – Okay mom. We're not "up to" anything.

Felipe's Mother (*resuming her house chores*) – That's better. I wouldn't want my kids with rebellious thoughts in their heads.

Felipe (*with a lower tone towards the group*) – Whatever story they're telling on that brain washing thing, it's working very well.

Alex – (*"says" something to Daniela*)

Dani – Don't worry, your story will be much better. When the press and other people see that you're right, they won't support the System anymore.

Alex – (*he smiles and "tells" her something else while pointing at her and Felipe*)

Dani – Alright, our story.

Angélica – What story?

Felipe – Nothing. We'll go meet Gabriel. Are you coming with us?

Angélica – Like, now?

Felipe – Some people enjoy having actual physical encounters every once in a while, you know.

Angélica – We could have a videoconference.

Felipe – With five people who live on the same street? Quit being lazy, let's go.

*Daniela and Alex laugh then follow Felipe and Angélica outside.*

## **Scene 12**

*System's Base. Two Henchmen bring Daniela's Sister, with her head covered, while she squirms and fights as much as she can to break loose from them. She is tied to a chair.*

*A few moments later, the System's Agent enters holding a sheet of paper and sits on a chair directly in front of Daniela's Sister, whose head is then uncovered.*

Henchman – This was a tough one. We were barely able to get in the apartment to make her stop screaming.

Other Henchman – We almost couldn't sedate her either. Until a while ago she was calm, but now the sedative has worn off.

System's Agent – Let's see how rebellious she is. Keep your eyes on her in case she tries to untie herself.

Daniela's Sister – If I untie myself you're dead!

System's Agent – The cat has claws. Why so much rage? We just want to ask a few questions.

Daniela's Sister – What happened to everyone who didn't come back? Didn't give the right answers?

Henchman – Of course they gave us right answers. In their opinion they were right.

Daniela's Sister (*ironically*) – As I thought.

System's Agent – Still I don't understand why so much rage. We are so good to you, to your family and everyone else.

Daniela's Sister – Good? You are as good as a master is good to his slave!

Other Henchman – What do you mean, I've never seen anyone chained or being mistreated around here.

Daniela's Sister – As if that made any difference. Your chains are different, and you don't have to mistreat only the flesh to enslave someone.

System's Agent – Interesting point of view. But I still don't understand, we don't go around controlling anyone's mind.

Henchman – We just open their eyes so that they see what's really going on.

Daniela's Sister – Open their eyes? You blind them, that's what you do!

Other Henchman – Blind them? We haven't even done anything to you, how can you accuse us of something that cruel?

Henchman – We even give you information, cable TV, comfort, internet access, with no charge.

Daniela's Sister – Of course. The channels you want us to watch while you watch our every click.

System's Agent – You've been listening to the wrong rumors. Everything we do is to guarantee your safety.

Daniela's Sister – And with that package you can also guarantee we all follow your orders, see and buy everything you want us to.

Other Henchman – The fact our products are of higher quality is not our fault.

Daniela's Sister – And the fact that the competition has gone missing is not your fault either, right?

System's Agent – Wrong rumors again. What do we have to say for you to believe that our goal is only to guide you towards a more beneficial path for yourselves and those around you?

Daniela's Sister – And for that you deprive us of four freedom? I would rather die than to live under those terms!

System's Agent – Careful what you wish girl.

Daniela's Sister – Or what? You'll cut my tongue off ?

*The Agent and the Henchmen look at each other and remain silent as Daniela's Sister continues to rampage.*

Daniela's Sister – You'll need a lot more than that to stop me! This house of cards you've built will soon crumble!

Henchman – I think this one is hopeless.

Other Henchman – Want us to sedate her again?

System's Agent – No, give her a little more time. The President might want to test his new guide on her to try and convince her. In any case, maybe our cold cells will make her change her mind. Otherwise, it will do her good to get used to never being heard again.

Henchman – After that we're dismissed?

System's Agent – Yeah, after that you're dismissed. Dismissed to go back to the operation.

*The Henchmen grumble, disappointed, then approach Daniela's Sister, who keeps on squirming and screaming while her head is covered again. She is then dragged out of the room. The Agent sighs and leaves through the opposite side taking the sheet of paper.*

### **Scene 13**

*Again the group gathers at that same forlorn playground so as to decide the fate of its mission. Gabriel has been waiting for quite a while for the others to arrive.*

Gabriel – What took you so long?

Dani – We were analyzing Felipe's last findings.

Gabriel – Without me, right? That's very nice of you. You know what? It doesn't matter, and do you want to know why? I'm tired of listening to you say I never take any action, blah blah blah, so I decided to do something.

*The group gathers closer around Gabriel as everyone seems extremely curious about what he is up to this time.*

All (except Gabriel) – WHAT?

Gabriel – I started a new event on my blog!

*They all turn their faces in disappointment, sigh and make all kinds of gestures to express their contempt for Gabriel.*

Gabriel – I’m just kidding, I didn’t even think about starting a new event.

*They all stop complaining about Gabriel and instead stare at him now.*

Gabriel – I went to the System’s base yesterday.

*The group gets thrilled and closes in to Gabriel now curious again.*

Angélica – So?

Gabriel – I didn’t see any movement or hear anything. It looked more like a graveyard around, and I stood there for quite some time. But it seems like the entrance gate requires some sort of pass code. I wasn’t able to try anything otherwise they would have noticed me.

Felipe – What kind of pass code is it?

Gabriel – Just a bunch of numbers.

Dani – Weird, that doesn’t sound very safe for a place where they keep so much important stuff.

Gabriel – What about you? Found anything hacking the station, Bill Gates?

Felipe – Nothing useful. Nothing close to a pass code either.

Gabriel – Couldn’t they have “encrypted” the pass code in a file, or any other crazy stuff ?

Felipe – Hardly. The encrypted files I found had nothing useful in them.

Angélica – They might have hidden the pass code in one of those lists.

Dani – I don’t think they would be that careless.

Felipe – And I would have noticed something different if that was the case.

Dani – I think the only way to find something out is to follow one of them up there, or wherever he goes.

Gabriel – That will be hard, I stood there for hours and didn't see anyone even close to the gate.

Angélica – Maybe they have another way in and that entrance is there as a smoke screen.

Felipe – That's possible, but we'll only know for sure if we find and follow one of them.

Alex – *(signals everyone to stay quiet)*

Gabriel – I heard something too, get down.

*All of them crouch and look for something to hide under. In the background, they hear running footsteps which, as they get closer, start mixing with the sound of heavy breathing. A System's Victim is then seen running away from a Henchman who is close behind.*

System's Victim – Run! Run!

*The Henchman catches up with and grabs him/her, making both fall to the ground.*

*The Victim struggles to break away with no success until another Henchman comes to help immobilize him/her. The Henchmen then hold the Victim, who squirms and screams, and take it away. The group remains hidden, completely astonished by the situation they've just witnessed. Alex quickly stands up and tries to go after the Henchmen, but is then pulled back by Gabriel who holds his arm.*

Gabriel – Are you nuts?! What do you think you're doing?

Dani – Alex, don't do it!

Alex – *(fighting against Gabriel's grasp while he tries to "say" something to Daniela)*

Dani – No Alex, you can't go after them now! They'll take you too!

Gabriel – Yeah, let them go Alex, it's just a kid!

*Alex suddenly stops fighting and stares at Gabriel, furious. He abruptly breaks off*

*Gabriel's grasp and tries to tell him something, with a scathing gaze.*

Dani – Alex, he didn't mean it.

Alex – *(taking a step back and repeating what he tried to tell Gabriel)*

Alex's Voice *(furious)* – “Just” a kid?!

*He angrily pushes Gabriel, who backs off looking scared and surprised. At this moment, I suggest the actors representing Alex and Alex's Voice, as well as the rest of the group, to be at the edge of their emotions. They can speak to the audience, Alex can speak, the group can speak in a chorus etc.*

Alex – *(pointing at Gabriel)*

Alex's Voice – You are just a kid! You are all just kids! All satisfied, sitting at your computers! Complaining about everything, as if everyone had to listen to your crap! As if there was no one else but you! As if all the problems in the world had to be solved for your benefit! Too scared to care about the suffering of those right next to you! Too scared to lift a finger when reality is facing you! Blinded by your own ignorance! Too blind to see how stupid you are, living among stupid people and being manipulated by more stupid people!

*Brief pause in which all are staring at Alex, still terrified.*

Alex's Voice – And even with the strength to scream, you prefer whining in the social media and turn your backs to the problem. I don't have that luxury. If I can't scream, I'd rather do something.

*All keep on staring at Alex in silence. Alex moves away and runs towards where the Henchmen went. The others then look at each other.*

Gabriel – Did you understand any of that?

Felipe – Nope.

Dani – Me neither. He looked really angry though.

Angélica – It looked as if he wanted to awake us to something.

*The group remains silent for a moment, recovering from Alex's explosion, of which no one understood a thing).*

Gabriel – We shouldn't just stand here.

Felipe – Yeah, there must be more coming where those came from.

Dani – But you'll just let Alex go by himself ?

Gabriel – He's the one who freaked out and shook us off, I doubt he'd want us to go with him. Besides, he's one the Henchmen will never hear.

Angélica – Don't worry Dani, he'll be back. He has a story to finish.

Dani – But...

Gabriel – Let's go!

*Gabriel grabs Daniela's arm and they all run away. Blackout.*

#### **Scene 14**

*Daniela is at her apartment with Gabriel. Both are restless, though Daniela looks even more on the edge for not having found her sister.*

Dani – My God, what can have happened to her? You think they caught her? Why wouldn't she just cooperate so she can come back home?

Gabriel – Take it easy, let's stop and think.

Dani – Stop and think? My sister is gone and now Alex went after those bastards as well! What could be worse?

Gabriel – At least we're here. We have to think about how we can help now.

*Enter Felipe with Angélica, both also very restless.*

Felipe – Any news from Alex?

Dani – No, it's probably been eight hours since he went after them, and my sister's

gone for even longer!

Angélica – Wasn't she here when you arrived?

Gabriel – No, and the TV was still on. Weird.

Dani – Weird my ass, they obviously took her!

Felipe – If I know your sister, she gave them a hard time, that's for sure.

Angélica – What now?

Gabriel – Let's think. Is there no other way to get in the base, Felipe?

Felipe – No way. It was hard enough to find out anything about the base!

Dani – We should take someone from the System at the station and make him spill out the pass code to get in the base!

Angélica (*getting excited*) – Let's beat them into submission!

Gabriel – No, what are you talking about? There are probably hundreds of them in there!

Felipe – We don't have much of a choice.

*At this point, Alex rushes in, breathing heavily. He doesn't look angry anymore, but is as uneasy as the rest. They are surprised with his return and try to settle him down. Daniela embraces him.*

Dani – Alex! I thought they had you!

Alex – (*smiles at her, but quickly turns serious, looks around the apartment and gestures something*)

Dani – No, we didn't find my sister. I'm really scared. I think they got her, and if they did, it'll be hard to bring her back.

*Alex holds her and the others try to soothe her as well.*

Gabriel – Everything will be alright Dani.

Felipe – Did you follow them to the base? Did you get in?

Alex – *(looks straight at Daniela and starts moving his lips)*

Dani – Right, you followed them, but couldn't get in the base.

Gabriel – WHY NOT?!

*They all stare at Gabriel and "shush" him.*

Gabriel – Okay, okay, go on.

Alex – *(turns back to Daniela and continues moving his lips)*

Dani – You think you got the pass code?

Felipe – Let's go get them!

Alex – *(signals Felipe and the others to calm down and keeps on "talking" to Daniela)*

Dani – We need to get ready. We all go in together, quickly but quietly. Let's take anything useful and threatening looking.

Gabriel – I can help with that. I'll bring all of my baseball bats. Anyone gets close, just swing.

Dani – That will work. Felipe, you must have something interesting, don't you?

Felipe – If tasers (??) are interesting to you, yes! I'll take everything I've got, I won't rest until I find out what kind of experiments they made on my mother to leave her like that.

Angélica – Neither do I. I'll take my sprays, they'll really annoy those guys!

Dani – Grab everything you've got at home and get ready. In an hour we'll meet at the base gate. There's no turning back, so you better be prepared.

Gabriel – Now you're talking! Imagine how cool it'll be to post on my blog that we broke in the System's base!

Dani *(ironically)* – Yeah, super cool. Your fans will love it.

Gabriel – You may think it's useless, but I am committed not to disappoint my followers.

Alex – *(approaches Daniela and moves his lips)*

Dani – Yes, you will write to many important people and wake them up from their dreams. And I'll get my sister back, I can't stand thinking what they may be doing to her. Hurry!

*The group is about to split when Gabriel screams.*

Gabriel – Hey, aren't you forgetting anything? It's our most important mission; we've got to do this right!

*Everyone gathers again, impatiently, join hands and shout.*

All – SAUSAGE!

*And run off, each on their way.*

## Scene 15

*The group has just entered the System's base. The air is gloomy and each is holding something: a fl ashlight, a bat or each other. Lighting is weak and failing, and occasionally goes out for a few seconds, leaving them in pure darkness.*

*Frightened, they start slowly walking away from the entrance door, which immediately closes shut behind them, making Daniela and Angélicascream.*

Angélica/Dani – AHH!

Gabriel – Shah! Silence!

Angélica *(yelling at Gabriel)* – Silence my...!

Felipe *(interrupting Angélica)* – Shah!

Angélica *(whispering at Gabriel)* – Silence my ass! Didn't you see the door?

*Alex, very calmly, takes the group's lead and begins crawling, very low and slowly, signaling the rest to follow.*

Felipe – What a horrible place! How is it they work here?

Angélica – Even the smell is horrible.

Gabriel – Looks like a fridge. I wouldn't be surprised if we found bulls and meat lying around.

Angélica – Maybe each base has a function. This one stores meat.

Felipe – What would they bring people here for then?

*A scream is heard down the bottom of the hallway which breaks the silence that once filled the room.*

Gabriel – This just keeps getting weirder and weirder...

Dani (*pointing at a spot on the ground*) – Dear Lord, what is that? It's not blood, is it?

Angélica – Hope not, I'm planning to leave this place very quickly and in one piece.

*The lights go out for a moment. They all gather tighter and stand still.*

Felipe – Keep quiet and don't move.

Dani – Who touched me?

*Silence.*

Dani (*through her teeth*) – Gabriel...

Gabriel – I didn't move at all! I'm right here!

Angélica – That's true Dani, he's right by me.

Dani – Then who...

*The light comes back on. They stare at each other and sigh.*

Felipe – That was weird.

*More screams from deeper away.*

Angélica – Now I'm serious! I want to get out of here!

Gabriel – Easy Angelica, we can't be far.

Dani – Let's finish this quickly, let's go.

*They start moving again, even slower than before, until they reach a fork.*

Felipe – Does anyone know where we’re going?

Alex – (*pokes Daniela and starts “telling” her something*)

Dani – You do? I’ll trust your instinct then. But... Will we have to split? I don’t like that idea.

Gabriel – What? Are you crazy? I hate that idea!

*The lights go out again. Footsteps are heard this time very near right ahead of the group, moving away from them.*

Angélica – What was that?

Felipe – Quiet, let’s just wait very quietly.

*The light comes back. Alex is no longer with the group, which makes them start getting agitated.*

Dani – Where is Alex?!

Angélica – What do you mean?! Where did he go?!

Gabriel – Silence! They’ll know we are here!

Felipe – Nobody moves when the lights are out, understood?

Angélica – Damn it, we have to get out of here! Let’s go back, please!

Dani – We can’t just bail out now! Not now that Alex vanished like that!

Gabriel – But we have no idea where we’re going, and there’s no way we’ll split!

Felipe – Of course not! Let’s just keep on moving forward together.

*The lights go out once more and this time Gabriel is heard screaming and hitting the ground and then being dragged away from the rest of the group that’s completely clueless. When the lights come back Gabriel is nowhere to be seen and the three that are left start panicking.*

Angélica – No, Gabriel too!

Dani – Okay, this has gone too far, let’s get the hell out of here!

Felipe – Any of you remember which way we came from? I guess it's that way

Dani – It must be. Let's stand back to back so we can see all around.

*At that precise moment the lights fail again. Angélica's sharp scream fills the room.*

*She falls and is also dragged away from the others despite the attempts of holding her. The lights come back.*

Felipe – Fuck, what do you want from us?!

Dani – Let's get out!

Felipe – Are you alright? Hold me and don't let go!

*Again the lights go out. Felipe starts being dragged and Daniela tries to pull him back, but fails and both their screams are in vain. The light comes back.*

*Daniela is sitting on the ground, alone, at the center of the stage, barely holding her tears. Blackout. Daniela's screams echo and start fading slowly.*

## **Scene 16**

*Alex is sitting at his room's desk, writing on a sheet of paper, finishing his story.*

Alex's Voice – Finally. This will be a beautiful conclusion for my work. I hope this convinces them. For I need everyone to see. I need everyone to listen. I need everyone to know the truth, to believe it. And more than that. That they have the strength to change it.

*He stands up and prepares to leave his room. As he rises, holding the sheet of paper,*

*Alex's "Mother" or "Father/System's Agent speaks to him.*

Alex's "Mother" or "Father/System's Agent – Are you ready?

*Alex looks outside and nods. He then walks away, calmly, holding the paper and giving off a subtle smile on his face.*

**The end.**