Small Parts

Set in a ladies bathroom in an airport.

\*please note, when casting the role of Cleaner, please be sensitive to cultural truths about those who serve and those who travel.

3 stalls are at the back of the stage. At the front of the stage are three sinks with frames for mirrors that aren’t there.

Scene one: there is a floor may be wet sign

A woman enters and pauses to see which stall to use, goes for third.

A second woman enters quickly goes into first stall, followed by a third woman who goes to the handicapped stall.

A fourth woman enters followed by mom with child and a line after them.

Child: Mommy, I have to GO.

Mom: I know honey, we have to wait our turn.

Child: I can’t wait mommy, I CAN’T wait.

Mom: It’s okay, just a little bit. We have to wait our turn.

Child: Mooooooooooooommmmmmyyyyyy

Mom: Listen Sweetie, I know it’s hard, but we have to wait. Let’s think about something else.

Child: Like what?

Mom: How about what it will be like to get to your Grandma’s?

Child: I don’t know

Mom: It will be fun. I know you will like her.

Child: Okay…

Mom: Honey, I promise, you will love her.

Child: But I don’t want to love her. I love you.

Mom: I love you too. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I love you so much more than pickles.

Child: \*giggles\* You don’t even like pickles

Mom: True…okay, I love you more than….chocolate?

Mom and child hug as another person crosses to the next empty stall.

Child: Mommy? I’m hungry.

Mom: Okay, after we are done here we can see if we can find something to eat.

Child: Don’t we have any more goldfish?

Mom: No honey, sorry. We ate all of them when we were waiting for our plane in Dallas. I promise we will try to find something really soon.

Child goes to sit on floor. Mom pulls at Child to get them to stand up.

Mom: Come on now, you can’t sit on this floor. It’s really dirty. Please, come on, stand up.

Child stands up but begins to lean on mom.

Mom: Please honey, stand up. I know you are tired and we are almost there. It has been a long day but I know you can do it. Please, stand up. It’s almost our turn. STAND UP!

Someone leaves a stall, the next person in line points to the empty stall and Mom sheepishly crosses to it pulling the child along.

Mom: Here we go honey.

Child: (as they walk to the stall) Mommy, I don’t want to live with Grandma. I can’t live with her. You are my home.

Mom pauses for a moment touching Child’s hair.

Mom: I know honey, you are my home too. It’s just for a little while.

Women enter and exit the stalls quickly. Mom and Child finally exit the stall and go to the sink to wash their hands. The women in line behind steps up to the sink beside them.

Child: Mommy?

Mom: (Busily washing both hands) Yes honey?

Child: Will Grandma love me as much as you do.

Mom pauses and catches the second woman’s eye and tears up and looks back at Child

Mom: I don’t think so honey. She doesn’t even like chocolate!

Mom tickles Child and they giggle as they leave. Mother slips and bumps into Cleaner who has entered to remove the wet floor sign. Cleaner keeps Mom from falling, Mom and Child exit. Cleaner looks at sign and decides to leave it and exits.

Scene two: There is a cleaning cart onstage

A Flight Attendant enters and goes straight to the handicap stall. A woman enters taking the third stall. A Third woman enters with a large handbag, a roller case, flowers, a coffee and an airport restaurant bag. She looks under the stalls until she gets to the open one. She tries to fit everything in the stall with her, but it won’t fit, so she leaves everything, but the flowers, right outside of her door. Just as she closes the door the handicap stall opens and the woman in the fourth stall speaks.

Bag Woman: Ma’am…ma’am? Excuse me, the woman who just left the last stall….Excuse me?

Flight Attendant: (pauses) Um, yes?

Bag Woman: I am so sorry, but could you please just keep an eye on my things? Please? I won’t be long and I know they tell you not to leave your baggage unattended, but I didn’t really have any choice. I mean the other stalls were closed and my things wouldn’t fit in this one and honestly after my third coffee this morning I couldn’t really wait, know what I mean?

Flight Attendant: I suppose, but I can’t….

Bag Woman: Oh my goodness, thank you so much, can you hold these too? (She thrusts the flowers over the top of the stall) I didn’t want them to get ruined, but if you are willing to hold them that would be really helpful.

Flight Attendant: Uh-huh (she takes the flowers and moves to the sink to try and wash her hands while holding onto the flowers)

Bag Woman: Again, thank you. I know it seems silly, but I really wanted to bring flowers with me. I didn’t know if there would be a place I could get them when I got here. I’ve never been to Minnesota before and with the cold weather I didn’t know what kind of flowers they would have.

Flight Attendant: Um…

Bag Woman: And I had to have flowers when I got here. You see I’m meeting my brother for the first time. Well half-brother. My dad had a kid before he met my mom that I didn’t know about until just a few years ago, and then he reached out to me and I thought “Why not?” so I’m flying here to meet him and you can’t meet your family for the first time without bringing something, and with the cold here I thought a bit of brightness would be just the thing. Because I’m from Raleigh. That’s in South Carolina. It’s already spring there and so beautiful. I looked it up on my weather app thingy and it says it’s still 43 here. I just don’t know how he lives here!

Flight Attendant: I’m sorry ma’am, but….

Bag Woman: It really does get cold here doesn’t it? I had a friend from college who grew up here and she said that you can even drive your car onto a lake during the winter. I really don’t think I would be brave enough to do that. It seems kind of silly too. Why would you want to be driving out on all that ice? What if you got stuck or something? I doubt Triple A would come out on a lake. Huh, I wonder if they would. Wouldn’t that be a story? Oh my goodness!

Flight Attendant: I’m really sorry, but I have to be going.

Bag Woman: Oh, that’s okay – I’m done, you really are the sweetest thing. If you hadn’t watched my bags I don’t think I could have gone because I would have been so worried, but you are an angel!

Bag Woman exits her stall. Flight Attendant tries to hand her the flowers and Bag Woman waves her off as she moves to the sink to wash her hands. Cleaner comes into the bathroom and begins to check the stalls.

Bag Woman: I do believe you just saved my life. Whew! Oh my goodness, I am just so nervous. I can’t believe I will be meeting Ben in just a few minutes! He’s my half-brother. This is just so exciting…and scary. (Bag Woman begins to load up) I mean what if he thinks I’m just a silly woman, or what if I’m not a match, I mean…

Flight Attendant: (quickly turns to Bag Woman) Match?

Bag Woman: Oh yes, my half-brother needs a kidney and they couldn’t find a match up here so I’m coming up to see if I can help. I mean we are only half related, but you never know!

Flight Attendant: Here, let me help you. (she takes the food bag and they start to move out when Flight Attendant stops) I know this may sound really weird, but thank you. My mother is in the hospital here in Minneapolis recovering from a heart transplant. People who are willing to give a part of themselves to save someone else are….(Flight Attendant just shrugs)

 Bag Woman opens her arms to give Flight Attendant a hug. As she does her flowers are knocked to the floor. Cleaner picks up the flowers and waits to hand them back when the hug is over.

Flight Attendant: And besides, once he has your kidney he won’t be your half-brother any more will he?

Bag Woman: Well, I guess not! I never thought of that, thank you. Oh my goodness!

The women exit together. The Cleaner continues to check the stalls and empty trash.

Scene three: some type of Muzak is playing

A young woman enters and crosses to the farthest sink. She is clearly distressed and is digging in her bag. She can’t find something and gives up in frustration. She grabs a paper towel, runs water over it as she looks at herself in the mirror in disgust and starts wiping the make-up that has run down her face. She stops midway doubling over the sink trying to stifle her tears. Frustrated she looks around the bathroom to make sure she is alone. She is and so she allows sound to escape until Cleaner walks in. She pulls herself together and crosses to the stall to use toilet paper to blow her nose.

When she returns to the sink her phone chirps and she digs for it in her bag. She looks at the screen, waits a beat and then begins to type a response. She takes a breath and then continues to clean up. She sneaks a glance at Cleaner who is cleaning the sinks and mirrors.

Young Woman: Excuse me, I’m sorry, but I just used the last of the toilet paper in that stall.

Cleaner: Oh, okay, thanks. (exits to get more T.P.)

Young Woman’s phone chirps again and she looks at the screen. It is obvious that the message hurts her. She furiously types a message but is having problems and is constantly correcting the message making it more frustrating. She throws the phone in her purse and takes a long look at herself in the mirror with no emotion. She looks at her face from every angle, taking herself in. She then slaps her face. She continues to look in the mirror. She slaps her face again as Cleaner walks in carrying the rolls. Young Woman quickly turns on the water and begins to splash water on her face. Cleaner pauses looking at Young Woman then continues to the stall to refill the toilet paper then returns to cleaning the sinks. As the Young Woman finishes cleaning her face the cleaner hands her a towel to dry her face.

Cleaner: It’s clean.

Young Woman: Thanks. (She dries her face)

Cleaner continues to clean this time in the stalls and/or floors.

Young Woman digs her make-up out of her bag and begins to reapply her entire face. As she applies each layer you begin to see that she is actually putting on her armor. She is not primping; each stroke of the make-up brush she stands a bit taller. The sadness is not gone, just hidden. During these moments her phone chirps several times but she resolutely ignores it until she is completely done. During this time the Cleaner has moved to sweeping.

*Young Woman is done with her make-up and she looks at her face again from all angles. She nods once and picks up her phone. She looks at the screen, starts to type a response, but stops and tosses her phone into her bag. She looks into the mirror and straightens her hair and crossing to the exit she hands the towel back to Cleaner. They both hold it for a moment.*

Cleaner: Strength looks good on you.

With a smile Young Woman leaves and Cleaner continues to sweep.

Scene 4: cleaning cart on stage

Cleaner: (singing softly while cleaning sinks and mirrors)

Co-worker: Hey, are you almost done?

Cleaner: Almost.

Co-worker: I’ll wait for you.

(Cleaner continues working)

Co-worker: Oh, hey did you hear about what happened at gate 12?

Cleaner: No, is it bad?

Co-worker: No, actually it was cute. There was a guy who wanted to propose to his girlfriend while they were in the air, but got sick so couldn’t do it until they landed. He got the entire cabin crew to create one of those hallway things, you know, standing on each side of them as they got off and at the end of the column he got down on one knee and asked. She said yes, but didn’t kiss him….cuz he had been sick you know? They whole place clapped. I guess it was fun.

Cleaner: Well, that’s a new one.

Co-worker: Yup. So. Have you seen Sean lately?

Cleaner: Sean? Oh, uh no. I haven’t.

Co-worker: Huh, that’s weird. He asked me earlier if you were working today. He said he wanted to ask you something but wouldn’t tell me what.

Cleaner: Oh, well, I haven’t seen him.

Co-worker: Okay, I was just wondering. Any big plans this weekend?

Cleaner: There, done.

Co-worker: Great, so any plans? (Helps gather cleaning supplies)

Cleaner: No not really.

Co-worker: Well, if you want to we can go out and do something. It could be fun.

Cleaner: Oh, yeah, maybe. It could be fun.

Co-worker: Great! I’ll text you where we are thinking about going. (starts to exit)

Cleaner: Wait. (pauses while someone enters the restroom and then quietly) Do you know if Sean will be there?

Co-worker: I knew it! You do like Sean!

Cleaner: No, I do not like Sean…please, I need to know if he will be there.

Co-worker: I haven’t invited him yet, but I can. He seems nice.

Cleaner: I thought so too, at first.

Co-worker: What do you mean?

Cleaner: (Looks away) Never mind. It doesn’t matter.

Co-worker: What do you mean it doesn’t matter? What is going on?

Cleaner: (In frustration) I just can’t be around Sean. If you invite him I will not go tonight.

Co-worker: Wow. Okay, I hear you. I won’t invite him. You are much more fun than he is anyway.

Cleaner: (small smile) Thanks.

Co-worker: Listen, whatever is going on, I’m here for you. If you feel like you need to talk, just let me know.

Cleaner: (looks at co-worker, as if she might break) Thank you. I’ve never told anyone what happened before, and I’m not sure I’m ready to yet, but I appreciate your kindness.

Co-worker: Are you kidding me? You are always the first one to step up when someone needs help with something. I would have to be some kind of monster if I didn’t do the same.

Cleaner: (starts to cry) You don’t know how hard this has been. Thank you, thank you so much.

Co-worker: (envelops her in a hug) Girl…let it out. I’m here for you.

*As the two hug center stage, each of the ladies she helped earlier step out, not looking at the couple, but at what the end of their journey would be. The mother giving her son to her mom. The woman meeting her half-brother. The flight attendant facing her day with strength.*

Co-worker: It’s all good. You know it’s the little things that matter.

End