

Everything falls Off

Setting:

A small dorm-like room. Could be comfortable, but it has been neglected by its owners for a while. There are two beds and two chairs.

Characters:

NATE. *A 30-year old who acts younger than he looks.*

SYD. *A crotchety old man. Missing fingers and/or arms.*

Syd's doing something weird when Nate enters, with suitcase and bag.)

NATE. Uh... is this my room?

SYD. Number?

NATE. Well... what?

SYD. Number? Room number?

NATE. Oh! I'm looking for 23.

SYD. Son of a gun.

NATE. Wrong one?

SYD. No. This is 23.

NATE. Are we gonna be roommates then?

SYD. God I hope not.

NATE. Oh.

SYD. You should hope for the same.

NATE. Why?

SYD. Because my roommates drop like flies.

NATE. I see.

SYD. They come in here fresh as fruitcakes, and the next thing you know it, they're hauling them off in wheelbarrows and pickle jars.

NATE. Pickle Jars?!

SYD. Yeah, you'd think we were in a leper colony or something.

NATE. Well, we are in a leper colony. I was diagnosed two weeks ago.

SYD. Mmm... yeah I see your sense of humor was the first to go. Well, welcome to Zombieland. Let me be the first to say: I'm going to fantasize about bowling with your head.

NATE. Wow. Have you been a leper for a long time?

SYD. Let me count the years. *(shows missing fingers as he does)*

NATE. I see.

SYD. It's more what you don't see, isn't it? *(laughs evilly)*

NATE. *(struggling with bags)* God these are heavy. Can you spare a hand? *(Syd reacts. Nate notices his mistake.)* Oh, I guess... I guess not.

SYD. Hey! Don't put those there. That's my floor.

NATE. Ok, what's my floor?

SYD. All this is mine (*indicating wide area*). All that is yours.

NATE. Ok.

SYD. But only up to 3 feet off the ground. The rest of the airspace is mine.

NATE. Why do you need airspace?

SYD. I don't. I just like the idea that I can make you crawl around.

NATE. Oh.

SYD. Otherwise, make yourself at home! And try not to speak to me unless I would care.

NATE. Ok. (*sits down*). I miss my real home.

SYD. Don't care!

NATE. (*sighs*) So, what does one do for fun in a leper colony?

SYD. Besides peeling off whatever's flaking today?

NATE. Yes, besides that.

SYD. I make designer curtains from stolen gauze. But don't you think you're getting any.

NATE. I live in your room and we share a window. I can't help having the same curtains as you.

SYD. Thief! How dare you threaten to steal the aesthetic value of my interior decorating.

NATE. But you stole all the decorations to begin with.

SYD. Stupid. Ugh. You just don't get it.

NATE. Let's play a game!

SYD. Ok.

NATE. Wow, you agreed. I didn't know you were capable of agreeing.

SYD. I'm a man of many talents.

NATE. Alright... what game?

SYD. The Shut-Up game.

NATE. How does that game-

SYD. SHUT UP!

NATE. -oh.

SYD. You lose.

NATE. You're no fun. (*playing the common practical joke*) Got your nose!

SYD. What? WHAT? (*frantic, searching*) How much of it? (*pries open Nate's hand, sees he doesn't have it*) Where'd you see it last?

NATE. No, no, Syd, it's a joke. To ease the tension.

SYD. Don't you EVER play that joke around here, son, understand?

NATE. Don't be so uptight.

SYD. If things were fallin' offa you as fast as they're fallin' off of me, believe me, you'd hold on *tight* too.

NATE. We're all lepers... nobody's making fun of anybody.

SYD. I dunno, I think the guy in room 6 has been fakin'.

NATE. Why?

SYD. He only loses fingernails and eyelashes... says he has a "mild case." Yeah right, he's just here to check out the nurses.

NATE. All our nurses are 40 year-old males with drinking problems.

SYD. (*looking at Nate closely*) Yeah well, people got some funny tastes in nurses these days. Back in my day, they wouldn't even let you fill out an application to be a nurse if you didn't have a d-cup and (*indicates legs*) primo stems.

NATE. Anyway I was talking to Mr. Nickerson about living here, and he said -

SYD. Who?

NATE. Ned Nickerson, he lives in number-

SYD. Ned the Nugget! Hah.

NATE. You shouldn't call him that.

SYD. But he has no arms or legs! How can I help myself?

NATE. Maybe with some compassion?

SYD. What is this strange (*pronounced like foreign word*) "compassion" you speak of, foreign devil?

(*awkward silence, which Nate tries to break*)

NATE. Wouldn't bowling with my head be hard? Your fingers would get all gunky from my eyes.

SYD. Nah, I'd take your eyes for ping-pong.

NATE. Oh. Still, I'm all lumpy.

SYD. The alley has a slight downward incline.

NATE. Oh.

(another silence)

SYD. So... have you lost the big one?

NATE. Excuse me?

SYD. Y'know... the big one. *(indicates crotch area)*

NATE. Oh! Uh, have you?

SYD. Nope, Mr. Happy Pants still rises with the sunshine!

NATE. That's alright, then.

SYD. If only I had something left to work it with. Now what about you? Still got the old frankfurter?
(answering his own question) Naaah, you're too young to be worried about that.

NATE. *(quietly)* Actually... it was one of the first things to go.

SYD. Oh Uh.. oh, sorry to hear that son. I'm sure he's fondly remembered.

NATE. Hey, y'know, it's just another appendage. *(he thinks for a moment)* I'll trade you an arm for yours.

SYD. *(covering crotch)* Absolutely not.

NATE. I had to try.

SYD. Understandable. So did you enjoy the show today?

NATE. What show?

SYD. The shock show, of course.

NATE. No, watching people get electrocuted to cure a strange disease is not my idea of a good time.

SYD. Oh come on. The faces they make!

NATE. No.

SYD. Yes. Like this *(he makes one)* or this *(another face)*.

NATE. That is so wrong.

SYD. What about the crazed puppy look? *(He makes a strange face with a big wagging tongue)*

NATE. That one's kinda... no!

SYD. Or the wet dog! *(he shakes his head vigorously as he is pretend-shocked)*

NATE. Well, there was this one...

SYD. Ooh, How'd it go?

Author's note: at this point, the two roommates imitate some of the shocked patients. Actors are free to add their own reactions, with accompanying lines to describe them. The only one which must be included is "The Syd.")

SYD. like a bunny *(he hops around)?*

NATE. Bigger! The kangaroo! *(he leaps around)*

SYD. The flaming snake *(he slithers).*

NATE. The robot!
(Does the robot dance)

SYD. That's one from my day.

NATE. Oooh, how bout the marathon runner?
(He runs in place, trying to get away from the shocks, which only make him go faster)

SYD. There's facial freak-out.
(He remains motionless and silent while shocked, but his face is contorted in ridiculous ways.)

NATE. The fish face too!
(He glubs like a fish while flapping his arms frantically.)

SYD. Oh, oh, nothing's worse than the smoke alarm.
(He makes a one note, very high pitched, very annoying scream while shocked.)

NATE. I hate that one. But it's not as bad as the hyperventilator.
(The patient breathes very very short, rapid, shallow breaths, like a machine gun)

SYD. Or the whale!
(He makes one long deep sound while slowly sloshing his body around)

NATE. The bursting betty seems pretty bad
(He tenses, and his face slowly grows red and swells. Syd prepares for explosion that never comes.)
But they're worst when they're duds.

SYD. You feel so unfulfilled.

NATE. I know!

SYD. Sometimes you get the masochist.
(A macho guy asks for more shocks while growling, etc.)

NATE. Or the occasional strangely aroused patient.
(He makes sexual noises while shocked, again asking for more.)

SYD. What about the Charleston?
(He does old fashioned dance to the time of the shocks)

NATE. Or the Syd.

SYD. What's that!?

NATE. *(while being shocked)* No! Do it to that guy!

SYD. *(thinks for a second, then bursts out laughing)* It's funny because it's true.

NATE. I knew it.

SYD. And it all leads up to the surprise triple brain-burner!
(While being normally shocked, he's hit by three ridiculous waves of it, shouting strange and hopefully hilarious things).

NATE. *(recovering from laughter)* Oh my god, we are so sick.

SYD. We're losin' limbs, might as well lose our minds as well!

NATE. Hold up. Does that ever scare you? Cause it scares me.

SYD. What, losing your mind?

NATE. Yeah, I mean... it must be terrible.

SYD. Personally I'd love to see you lose your mind.

NATE. You know what I mean. It's a frightening thought, sort of a plunge into the unknown.

SYD. Clearly you've never been old.

NATE. Oh, you're not crazy. Just senile and smelly.

SYD. Thanks.

NATE. I hope I don't go crazy in here.

SYD. Funny thing, that is... when you're losing everything else, your body seems to just work harder to keep your sanity around.

NATE. Wow. Isn't science wonderful?

SYD. *(ignoring him, going into his own world)* Of course, sometimes I feel like I'd be better off if I was insane. Wouldn't have to put up with the pain, with the rejection, with the loneliness. And I especially wouldn't have to put up with the roommates. Sometimes, I think I'm just gonna *snap*.

NATE. Uh...

SYD. Yeah, I'm just gonna snap, and I'm gonna get out that big whaling knife I keep under my bed, and creep up on my little roommate... maybe while he's sleeping, or eating, or whittling, or going to the bathroom, and just go *(he acts everything out in the attack and the aftermath)* WAPOW! WABAAM! SLLLIICE!! KAPISSH!!! And he'd go VOOOSH! KADOOM!!! All over the room. Yeah. Sometimes I feel like that, but then I take a couple Advil and I'm good. *(looking at Nate again)* Hey, you OK? You look a little shaky.

NATE. I don't think I'll ever be able to take a whiz around you again.

SYD. How does that work, y'know, without...? *(indicates crotch)*

NATE. Well, actually it's quite... hey! None of your business.

SYD. Right, right. *(pause)* So do you have to sit down?

NATE. I hate you.

(both look out to the side, as if someone has come in.)

NATE. My turn, huh? There's always more tests at this place...

SYD. These male nurses love to get you out of your clothes.

NATE. That's an ugly stereotype, Syd.

SYD. Most of them are pretty repulsive. Except for Victor... he's... well-built...

NATE. What?

SYD. Nothing. Nothing at all. Good luck.

NATE. Nah, nah, tell me to break a leg. I'm suspicious.

SYD. Break a leg, that's not bad around here. Lose a leg! *(Nate laughs, exits. Syd remains standing. He looks normal, then something comes over his complexion. He touches his hand to his stomach, as if he has a slight ache. Then his neck convulses. Then he reacts, as if something is trying to escape from his mouth, but he holds it back.. It happens again, something of a vomiting motion, and this time a little sound escapes before he can close it off.)* Fuh! *(He looks amazed and confused. It happens once more, with a larger build up, and this time it completely escapes, as he says in a large, booming voice:)* Four Hours Later! *(He shrinks with embarrassment, but his ailment seems to pass. He shakes it off.)* Must have been the burritos. Never can tell what dropped into them from whoever's on slop duty.

(Nate slowly walks in, seemingly exhausted.)

NATE. Hey.

SYD. What's up, partner. Those nurses still hairy.

NATE. Yeah.

SYD. And did you steal some gauze?

NATE. Sure.

SYD. Hot damn, I'm gonna make me some new curtains. What color you want, roomie?

NATE. Syd.

SYD. Ok. It's something you should think about.

NATE. Syd, it's getting a lot worse.

SYD. You.. what? *(making an unsure guess)* Oh... oh, you mean, living here. It's a tough one, bucko, but things'll get better.

NATE. No, I wish... I want to keep living here.

SYD. Well... why?

NATE. They're transferring me to the hospital on the main island tomorrow. Like I said – it's a lot worse.

SYD. Oh. *(pause as he searches for something appropriate to say)* But you're the first roommate I liked!

NATE. But I don't really belong as your roommate.

SYD. Why not?

NATE. I don't have leprosy.

SYD. What? Not a single bit?

NATE. Sorry, buddy. I was misdiagnosed.

SYD. You're a faker!

NATE. No, Syd...

SYD. You are! You cut off your parts! You're a big faker! You even...

NATE. I didn't!

SYD. You cut off Mr. Winky! You big fake! Fake Fake Fake!

NATE. Be reasonable.

SYD. You're a faker, just like my ex-wife. She had me fooled for years! Fakey!

NATE. Won't you listen, Syd?

SYD. I can't! I'm too busy doing the fake dance! *(he does the dance)*

NATE. SYD! *I am* infected. I do have a disease.

SYD. Well what is it? Stupid ugly liar's disease?

NATE. No, actually, it's Ebola.

SYD. *(stops dance)* Oh. Crap.

NATE. I know.

SYD. I have it to now, don't I?

NATE. No, we'd have to kiss, or do intravenous drugs together.

SYD. I think I touched you, once.

NATE. That's ok. You just can't touch any of my slushy parts.

SYD. Rrrrr.

NATE. It's ok. You can do the Ebola dance.

SYD. I can't do the Ebola dance, Nate.

NATE. Why not?

SYD. Because I'd have to dissolve onto the floor and run down the little drain!

NATE. Syd, that's mean.

SYD. Well they don't have the drain for nothing now, do they?

NATE. Ugh.

SYD. Don't give me that look. I'm not going to die for you.

NATE. What?

SYD. Oh that's what you want, I'm old, I'm supposed to sympathize with you and magically cure you, or die with you to make you feel less alone, or something stupid like that. Let's hold hands and plunge into the abyss together! Oh goody!

NATE. Uh, that's crazy.

SYD. No. I can't do anything. Why did you even come back to the room?

NATE. Jesus. I thought you would like to know.

SYD. Could have just sent for your bags. I would have assumed you were dead.

NATE. You would want to find out that way?!

SYD. It wouldn't surprise me.

NATE. You're a cold bastard.

SYD. You first.

NATE. Hey!

SYD. Fine. I'm sorry. But what am I supposed to do. Pretend it's ok?

NATE. Sure!

SYD. Alright, suggest something.

NATE. Let's pretend we're madly in love.

SYD. For all that's good and holy, why?

NATE. So we feel happy and special.

SYD. That's crazy.

NATE. You always wanted to try crazy.

SYD. Alright.

NATE. Alright. Syd.

SYD. What?

NATE. I love you baby?

SYD. What?!

NATE. C'mon!

SYD. I, uh... (*trying hard*) I'm gay and I love you! My... lump of sweet man-sugar.

NATE. I love you too... (*they touch awkwardly.*) But wait. I don't have a... y'know. Thingamadoozle.
A dong.

SYD. That's ok, we'll share mine.

NATE. Oh, stumpy!

SYD. Scabface! (*they touch again.*)

NATE. Well, that was fun, but I'm still depressed. And I smell like old person.

SYD. It's a fine scent. Like aged wine.

NATE. Let's not get off the subject.

SYD. Then try again.

NATE. Ok, uh... Good news! I'm not dying of leprosy.

SYD. I knew that. That's why you suck.

NATE. I mean, not leprosy or Ebola.

SYD. Oh?!

NATE. No, I'm dying of syphilis!

SYD. ...Ok. No.

NATE. Crabs?

SYD. You can die of crabs?

NATE. They're big crabs. ... I dunno. This is hard.

SYD. Don't complain to me. I don't know what to do.

NATE. I know, Syd, I know.

SYD. Hah.

NATE. Fine.

SYD. Fine what?

NATE. We'll just sit here.

SYD. Ok.

(they sit)

SYD. And do what?

NATE. And wait for me to die!

SYD. Hmmp.

(more waiting. Slowly, Syd gets up and starts to poke Nate)

NATE. Not yet, moron. I'll let you know.

SYD. Oh. Hmmp. *(he sits again)*.

(There is a long pause).

SYD. Now how are you gonna tell me when you're dead?

NATE. Just lay off me for once, will you?

SYD. I've only been laying into you for a day.

NATE. Well it was enough!

SYD. Oh. *(a pause)* Am I really that bad?

NATE. I don't know. I guess you are.

SYD. Well then.

NATE. Now shut up and let me rot in peace.

SYD. No! If I'm going to be a bastard, I'm going to be one all the way to the grave!

NATE. Yeah?

SYD. Yeah! To your grave!

NATE. Whoa.

SYD. You no good lying sack of putrid llama dung, you come in here with your fancy shoes and imported diseases and you think you can just tango all up and down the place, like you're the king of the limb pile. Well let me tell you something, we earned those limbs, not by shocks or drugs but through pure hard loss. I lost everything first, then I lost those limbs. Those limbs were like the afterthought. They're what the demons take to hell. But I left everything here. A wife, a kid, parents that needed my support. That's all gone. I watched it rot away, my life and what was important to me. And if there's not a stinking piece of me left to be compassionate after I lost all of that, well it's not my problem anymore. And you, you come in here, Mr. pimpy poop shoes,

NATE. *(quietly)* What is this obsession with my shoes?

SYD. And you try and become my friend, and heal my pour leper soul. Well let me tell you it worked, and now that soul is back just a little, and it is not ready to be lost again. I am not ready to be lost again. So I'm mad, I'm mad at you. And when I'm mad, I'm a rat bastard. So you better be ready for it.

NATE. Syd.

SYD. Are you ready for it?

NATE. Yeah, I am.

(They embrace.)

CURTAIN