

Instructions for The Fallen

by: Megan E. Tripaldi

PLAYWRIGHTS NOTE:

Cast between One and Four individuals that are comfortable with movement.

This could be done as a solo piece or as a group piece.

Please incorporate as much movement in your direction as possible, especially during the Interviews.

This should have no set, but could utilize projections.

Instructions for The Fallen

SETTING: A vast, empty space.

AT RISE: There is only dark and wind.

PART 1: The Fall

Suddenly we hear a rushing sound. The rushing gets louder as if something is hurtling towards the earth followed by a distant scream and then a terrible crash.

Lights come up and there are several bodies lying on the stage who appear dead until each of them groan and slowly, painfully stands up facing upstage. Two long, bloody scorch marks are revealed on each of their shoulder blades. They turn slowly, look up, and try to stand, which is quite an effort. They keep trying several times, not quite making it up each time. Eventually, like baby horses they each make it up, wobbling, but eventually stable.

They look all around the space and then they look down. They begin to feel themselves, trying to figure out what their strange appendages are.

They explore the majority of their body until they come to their back. Something feels weird. They move to touch their back and double over in pain. Gingerly, they feel the burns again, trying to look over their shoulder and see them.

Perhaps they cough or clear their throat. Vocal chords - they make a series of odd and exploratory noises, and sing until they can say 'hello' successfully. And then they explore the 'hello' as communication.

In the midst of the medley there is an overwhelming rushing sound filled with whispers. It stops and they fall to their knees, clutching their head. Suddenly the noise stops.

They look around. Clothes litter the stage. They start to look through the piles until they find things to try on, not quite getting it on the right part of their body. They don't quite have the right outfit the first time and explore the options among themselves. Once they find their outfit they get dressed and begin to wander. One of Them suddenly discovers a remote, calls the others over. They examine it, and then one of them presses a button.

PART 2: The Instructions

(A cacophony of sounds and (possibly) images. Everything suddenly shuts off and goes silent. A voice plays in the dark.)

V/O:

Ok, uh...Do you want me to just - ? Awesome. Uh, yeah! So where should I start? Right, right ok - um. Yeah. So, I am an Angel...*was* an Angel. I mean, if that's what you want to call us, I guess. And - yeah, I guess it all starts with the day I fell.

So it's pretty similar for all of us. Something happens, usually something we never thought would be an issue, but it was. And then:

(Whistles, makes explosion noise. Music and static as the lights come up. Another of Them takes the remote and pushes another button. There is a rewinding sound and a click. A new voiceover plays.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Oh, hello! So if you've found this you just fell. You're probably still getting your bearings, you are probably a little disoriented. There will be a lot of noise and a bit of dizziness - Don't worry! You'll adjust. It just takes a minute. You're on Earth now.

(They start to panic.)

Listen to me. Don't Panic.

(They make a ridiculous effort to not panic.)

I, too, am a Fallen Angel so you can trust me. Well, it's the easiest thing to call myself, because that's what they call us - but we'll get there.

You may not know why you have been ejected from home - none of us do. This is just a missing piece of information that you will have to accept. We're all kept in the dark on this level. You are not alone.

You are part of a collective now. A group of people who fall under the label "Fallen". This means we are different. Which is an arbitrary term because, let's face it, everyone is "different", right? Well, you may not know that; you've been taught to be the same. But trust me: Different is better. And it is essential to becoming one of *them*.

I've been surviving here for a long, long time (at least from the perspective of the people here) so I know how to navigate this realm. I've put together this instructional soundscape to help you get through this unsettling time. It's just a few simple instructions I've come up with to ease your transition into living here as well as interviews with our people to help you get started. Hopefully this will put you on a path you are comfortable exploring. They are all unique, just like us. Just like you. Some may seem scary, some funny, some strange; they're all important, but if you feel unsafe, please don't harm yourself for the sake of knowledge. This is another thing about this place; you have the option to take care of yourself.

Are you ready?

(They all nod.)

I'm going to assume you nodded 'yes' since language is still coming to you. Good. Then let's begin. Are you taking notes?

(They look around for a pen and paper, going into the audience like they did for the clothes. The voice laughs.)

Don't worry, you don't need to take notes. All of this is simple enough.

(They look around incredulously.)

So you've just been kicked out of Home. How are you feeling? Assess yourself.

(They check their body.)

Is there any pain? Are any of your limbs bending in a way that seems to feel incorrect?

(They try to bend their limbs in odd ways.)

Your wings are gone now. They burned off on the way down. You may have some pain or scarring. This will go away in time.

(Some of them feel their burns.)

You should be in Human form. If you are unsure whether or not you are in human form please press the blue button now.

(They assess themselves again and decide they are in Human Form.)

Congratulations! You've survived.

(They're proud of themselves.)

Now there are some new things that you will have to learn in order to live on Earth. It's not an easy place, especially because your powers are now limited. You still have them, but you have to blend in. It is *essential* that you do this because if you don't your life on Earth will be incredibly difficult. It's best to blend in just enough so that people don't desire to cause you pain, but not so much that you fade into obscurity. This balance will be difficult to navigate.

(They start to panic again.)

I have a feeling you're starting to panic again. Don't. Just breathe.

(They take deep breaths.)

Keep breathing. It's a luxury that we didn't have before. It's something that will ease the anxiety that you are undoubtedly feeling.

Remember the part about being different? That is how you blend. Don't worry, you'll get there.

You may have experienced a rush of information upon landing. Some of this will stick and some will seem innocuous. Take it all in. Take in as much information as you can, whenever you can. This is another essential part of living here: Information is the highest tradable commodity and even if at times it doesn't seem like it, it is important. Over time it will become easier to filter out what is necessary and what is not.

So, to review: Blend. Breathe. Absorb.

I know it seems like a lot, and it is, but being what you are and what you were you will be able to handle this, no problem.

Oh, one last thing: find us. We're out there and you will know when you see us. We are Fallen and we are here for you. Just start looking.

Good luck.

(There is a click and the voice is gone. They start to panic again, crying and pressing buttons over and over until there is a strange noise and the lights shift.)

PART 3: The Interviews

(There is a change - ONE steps forward, becoming the stage manager of the group. The others are very confused.)

ONE:

Can you bring up one? Now three and six? Ok, I'm going to move to the stage, let me know if - yeah. Ok, how's that? Yeah? Ok, cool.

(To the audience.)

Ok, hello! Hi, everyone, thank you so much for coming. Honestly, I have no idea how this is going to go, so I am so glad that you're here. Um. Everyone being interviewed in what you are about to see today has given their consent and this wasn't a surprise to anyone. But, um...I am really proud of this project and I think - yeah. I am just really happy to be here and that you are my test audience; I mean I am so, so grateful, so thank you. What else...is that it? Awesome! So I'm just going to check in with the booth and then we'll get started. Ok? Cool? Great.

(To the booth.)

You ready up there? Everything look - ? Ok, great. Here we go.

(They pull out a remote.)

So, this is, uh...*Interviews with the Fallen*. Um...The culture behind Fallen Angels is often overlooked as mythology or even religion, and isn't considered something worthy of a documentary. But the culture, the struggle, and the sheer pain of those who were pushed out of heaven is real and alive. And that's why I've decided to make this documentary. Because I'm one of them and it's nice to know I'm not alone. So, uh... Yeah. Thank you for watching and, uh...I hope this helps.

(Click. Lights go out.)

V/O:

What's this for again? Oh, cool! Yeah, no totally I'm on board. Do you want me to just - ? Awesome. Uh...yeah! So where should I start? Right, right ok - um. Yeah. So, I am an Angel...*was* an Angel. And - yeah, I guess it all starts with the day I fell.

(Lights come up. There is a change - they each inhabit a unique body, looking down until it is their turn to speak in borrowed voices.)

V/O:

Tell me about the day you fell.

TWO:

So it's pretty similar for all of us. Something happens, usually something we never thought would be an issue, but it was. And then:

(Whistles, makes explosion noise.)

FOUR:

I had a pretty calm, clear, rational head, especially for the situation I was in. I mean, for the most part. I'm not going to pretend I wasn't scared.

TWO:

Yeah, you know I don't mean to over-simplify it, but that's just how it goes. I mean what am I supposed to do, panic? I need to make this work. I need a life, I need to find my people. I mean, we all end up here, you know, the ones that fall. Or, you know. We get lost. Go down, down, right? I mean the whole practice of ejecting us started with Him anyway. You know: *Him*. Not Him.

(Points up.)

Him.

(Points down.)

Sort of lowered the bar after that.

THREE:

Are you serious? I - no. You can't possibly think - No. Of course I'm upset. Why shouldn't I be upset? I got booted out of my home for no reason! Well no, not no reason, but a stupid reason. No, I don't want to talk about it. Fuck off.

V/O:

How did it feel?

ONE:

It being...?

TWO:

Wow, uh...sorry, can you elaborate?

THREE:

I said fuck off.

FOUR:

“It” can mean a lot of things.

V/O:

I don't know. I guess, all of it? Start from the beginning.

ALL:

Hmmm...

FOUR:

It was like a rush of information, like all at once I knew everything that had happened. It all came barrelling back into my brain. I'm not sure if that was on purpose or not.

ONE:

I fell so hard, I made a pit that I couldn't get out of. That's what it's like when Angels fall. Things get left behind. Holes form.

TWO:

It's a big fucking mess, you know? Excuse my language.

FOUR:

I had woken up naked, stripped of my wings, and confused. I had no idea who I was, what I was, how to speak; I was totally alone. Yeah, I was mad, but honestly, I was just so scared. In that moment being mad didn't matter.

ONE:

I was just coming back into my own mind. Remembering that I was something, someone. Starting to recall my name and how my hands worked and that I did indeed possess a body. And then out of nowhere I just found myself standing there, screaming at the sky.

THREE:

Ok, look, sorry, no come back, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to - it's just a sensitive subject, ok? Yeah. I mean I loved them so much, but like, you know. There are those types of relationships where one side obviously cares way more than the other? Yeah. That's kind of the family dynamic up there. I mean, it's hard, you know, but I was fine with it. I lived with it. But I guess living with it wasn't enough, so...

ONE:

I just remember thinking, this can't be it. This can't be where I ended up. This is not the end for me. But it was. And then again it wasn't. In a way it was just the beginning after a really abrupt ending.

TWO:

But I'm still *cool*. I mean I haven't, you know... A lot of the others, you know, they find their own way. I've managed to find a few of us over the past couple of centuries, but not everyone wants to stick together. That's fine. Not everyone wants to admit what happened. Some just gave up.

FOUR:

My brothers. The day I fell they were being especially...themselves. It was the oldest who I really got into it with. He was so good at instigating me. That's what happens when you have soldiers for brothers; you're always competing, even if you don't want to, even if you aren't a soldier yourself. I swear, it's like he wanted me to go. Just...always pushing and pushing. I never caught a break, but he was my brother. And I loved him.

THREE:

And yeah I'm - this world is not - I mean, ok living up there was hard, right? Like, the TV shows down here got one thing right: Angels are fucked. I mean, sibling rivalries? Are you kidding me? It's all a game, living up there. It's all a game of who can love just the right amount. Who can be the most useful. Heaven forbid if you have an independent thought. Literally. And there are so many of us, well...you've read the mythology, I'm sure; that's why you're doing this, right?

V/O:

No, I - I've lived it. I'm like you.

THREE:

Oh... You just don't seem - Ok. Ok...

TWO:

Oh, no don't get me wrong, I do love being here. Yeah, it's really nice. I enjoy humanity so much. The food alone! I never imagined the options. I mean the need to eat - well, it is kind of exclusively for animals and humans are animals, right? So there you go. But the cool thing is that humans, like, oh my god they can eat just for pleasure, not just for survival! Ha! It's crazy. Humans can find pleasure in the most beautiful places.

THREE:

But like I was saying: Here? Earth, or whatever? This is a whole different kind of hard. I mean how does someone like me survive in this world in the way it's structured? Ok, no gender, no wings, no power. Everything is hard. I'm constantly fighting just to feel comfortable in my own skin. Existing is just...tedious. Honestly I don't know how much longer I can take it down here.

V/O:

Tell me about Humanity.

ONE:

It's...something else.

TWO:

I love it!

THREE:

How much time do we have?

FOUR:

I'm not sure I have the words.

V/O:

Have you discovered anything that brings you joy or pleasure?

TWO:

Ok. So, let me be clear here, I know that, you know...sex. It's a thing. And it took me a while to understand the mechanics of it. Like, what people consider sex is fine, like that kind of pleasure is great as long as everyone is in agreement. I can at least appreciate it from an outside perspective. But food, man...I think that's the most underrated pleasure there is. Infinite combinations of flavor and texture, constant adaptation and evolution -

like if people ever feel like something is missing in their lives just examine the intricacies of spaghetti sauce. Seriously. I mean this...Hey can we pause this for a second and get something to eat? There is this Italian place I know of, nobody's ever - oh man. You gotta try it. Seriously - rock your freaking world.

V/O:

So if you had the option to leave, but you couldn't go back home, would Hell be an option?

ONE:

I don't...I mean, maybe? I don't know. I don't know what it's like. Is it even real?

TWO:

What? Why would you even ask that?

FOUR:

What, me? No, I wouldn't go there. Well...No, maybe I just haven't made up my mind yet. I mean, Lucifer was one of us, right? Who knows if the stories are just...stories. At this point I just don't know what to think.

THREE:

How do you know Hell isn't here?

V/O:

What is it like living here on Earth?

TWO:

Oh boy, how much time do I have?

ONE:

Ummm...

FOUR:

Let me just - I have a really good metaphor, I just need a minute to organize my thoughts...

THREE:

Remember when I said Hell could be here?

V/O:

Do you want to talk about it?

THREE:

(Sigh)

Ok, so. There was one day. Yeah, um...something happened. See, part of being here, you have to be able to pass as human, and yeah we're not - like we aren't totally stripped of power, but we aren't as strong, you know? And there is something about us that people can't quite put their finger on, but we're different.

FOUR:

It's hard to describe what it's like living there. Right? There isn't really a human experience that it mirrors. Um... It's like... Ok, there is always a feeling you can't get rid of that something isn't right, but it still feels kind of good. You know? Like eating too much ice cream. Ok, it tastes so good, but you can't keep eating it or you'll be sick. You are even starting to feel sick, but you can't stop. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

TWO:

I'm so sorry, I totally forgot where I was going with this. Right! Right, right ok. Humanity. I mean food, but that's just a small part of it. Physicality in relation to pleasure can be so...vast! Yeah, it's a beautiful thing to explore.

THREE:

I want to say one of the biggest parts of the struggle is that we don't, um, identify in the same way - do you know what I'm saying? And some people can't really, you know process how we are and, uh...some people can be really cruel and - it can be so dangerous.

ONE:

Nothing made sense. Nothing *makes* sense. How I got here, what I had done to get here, what I would do next. And when I got here I was surrounded by nothingness. Literally, there was a void surrounding me. And then the anger came. And I wanted to destroy everything; anything I could get my hands on, but all there was...well, there was only me.

THREE:

So, uh... One night I was just walking and, uh people started shouting at me like I was just - and I ignored them because what else was I supposed to do, you know? And, uh - I guess they didn't like that so they, uh...

No, I'm fine, I - No. No, I'm so sorry. I can't - I'm so sorry, I can't do this. Can - please, can you turn - ? I'm so sorry. Just stop the tape. Please just turn it off!

(A moment.)

FOUR:

So it's like - Ok close your eyes. Are they closed? Seriously close them. Ok. Good. Now think of a tune. Make one up. Can you hear it? It kind of gets stuck in your head, but doesn't chafe the insides of your brain like sandpaper? Let it play. Open your eyes. Can you still hear it? Good. Hold on. Hold on as tight as you can, because it's the last good thing you have that is only yours. That. That is what it's like.

ONE:

It isn't like it sounds. It makes it seem like I was just walking one day then tripped and fell by accident. But it wasn't an accident. No, it wasn't a mistake, it's never a mistake with any of us. These things are always deliberate, ok? I didn't fall. I was pushed. And now I have to just...be. I don't think anyone can understand how that feels.

THREE:

Yeah, no I'm ready. Um...It's really easy to be angry. I think that's part of it; the whole experience. I think that's what happens when you're just human. Like, why would anyone choose this? It's not even life it's just...surviving. So that's what I have to do. Just, you know... What other choice do I have?

TWO:

I still have faith. And I try to keep it. It'd be so easy to hang on to this animosity, right? Like, always feeling like you were the one wronged, blaming everyone else, blaming Him. But you can't think like that. You know, it's like, every day there is a new test; it's like all these little tests that end up becoming one big test. And I am ready for it, ok? I won't stop believing. Because if I keep my faith, if I keep trying, I'll get back home. Honestly I am happy here. Sometimes. I am.

V/O:

If you had the option, would you go back home?

(They all look up.)

THREE:

Do I want to go back home? Honestly, I don't even know at this point.

FOUR:

Part of me does, part of me doesn't. I mean after you get used to a place... I mean what does home even mean, really?

TWO:

Yeah, of course I want to go home. Why wouldn't I? I mean it's home...Yeah, I'll be home really soon. You can guarantee that.

ONE:

Home. Heh...I don't know. I guess I'm still figuring that out.

(Click.)

PART 4: The Resolution

The sound of an unwinding. We hear echoes of “Find us, we’re out there” over and over, fading and swelling.

They stand together, realizing they had inhabited the bodies of their formers. An individual check, touch, grounding. They look to each other, check, touch, grounding. One by one they try to figure out if they should leave. There are tears. There is laughter.

Together they make a resolution. Together they breathe. Together they exhale.