

THE PIT

by

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CHARACTERS

SEBASTIAN..... 40s, happy-go-lucky man with Tourette's

JOE / JOEY / JOSEPH..... well-intentioned commoner

BOB / BOBBY..... rascal teen / Sebastian's caring son

JACK / JOHNNY..... rascal teen / curious kid

PATTY / PATRICIA well-intentioned commoner / pompous upper-class lady

SETTING

The countryside.

ACT I.

SCENE 1

SEBASTIAN is sitting in a pit, singing to himself "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall".

JOE

(yells)
You need a hand down there?

SEBASTIAN

No thanks.
(goes back to singing)

Joe exits.

SEBASTIAN

Redneck motherfucker. (beat) Hello?
(whistles "Home Home on the Range")

PAT

(yells)
Can I help you down there?

SEBASTIAN

No thanks.

PAT

Are you sure?

SEBASTIAN

Nice ass. Shitty hat. (punches head) Rrrrr!!!

Woman exits.

SEBASTIAN

(sings "Where the Deer and the Antelope Play")

Teens arrive, laugh and spit on Sebastian. They throw dirt and leaves down on him.

BOB

Look! It's a scientific experiment.

JACK

How's the weather down there? Looks like showers.

They throw handfuls of pebbles in the air.

BOB

Listen to the rainfall. I think it's hail. Is it hail down there? Haahaha.

The kids run off.

SEBASTIAN

(sings)

"I've been working on the railroad. All the live-long day. I've been working on the railroad just to pass..."

On the upside, I have tons of time to think, sing, and dig; meet new people, look closely at these bugs. Why would anyone dig a hole here? I can't be that far from home. Geez how low can you go? I mean, I can count the number of pits I've encountered on one hand, one finger, on one cell of one finger tip.

(tic explosion) Suppress anger up your ass!

What do bugs really taste like? Oil? Dirt? Maybe if you smoke 'em, they taste like jerky. I wonder what human flesh tastes like. I mean what do cannibals say? What's in their cookbook? I mean if I'm hungry and stuck in a pit, which I happen to be, what part of the body is a good place to start gnawing, and at what point does it become detrimental to my health? I want to know the human capacity? When do we break down?

When day breaks, there's a new hope and optimism. The president said we have reason to hope. So I am hopeful. People hope for so many things, always contradicting. We hold different opinions about what is good or right for another for ourselves for the nation.

(tic explosion) Lying Christian fundamental motherfucker.
What is hope but airy belief?

JOEY

Hey you all right down there?

SEBASTIAN

I'm fine. How are you?

JOEY

Well I'm not in a pit.

SEBASTIAN

Right. I know this stupid pit. Popped out of nowhere and...here I am...just couldn't help it. I mean... I wasn't stalking or scheming or anything like that. It's just...

JOEY

Right. So you want a hand out of that pit or what?

SEBASTIAN

Don't get me started about this blasted pit. I'm at war with this pit right now.

JOEY

Sir! Do you want a hand or would you rather spend alone time blathering of alternate worlds?

SEBASTIAN

Wha... This is my reality mister. I didn't ask for this. It grabbed me.

JOEY

For the last time— do you want me to call someone, maybe get a rope?

SEBASTIAN

A rope? You'd like that. Some rope hangs me, then it won't be your problem no more. You'd just fill in the hole with some dirt.

JOEY

So long.

SEBASTIAN

(Beat. Tic explosion) Ahhh!

Okay. What was that? We won't do that again. The next person that walks by, I am cordial. I ask for a hand. I don't say no to nothin. I don't sing into outerspace. I don't pick a fight and tell them their breath stinks or their mom's a whore. That's what we're going to do next time. The next time a helping hand comes my way.

(sings) And it'll be coming around the corner when she comes. She'll be coming round the corner when she comes...She'll be riding six white horses. She'll be riding six white horses....

PATRICIA

Hello in there.

SEBASTIAN

Hello fine lady.

PATRICIA

What is your business down there?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, my business is rather dire at the moment. Could you lend a hand? Perhaps there's a ladder you could lower. I believe there's a barn nearby.

PATRICIA

I suppose I could, but then you'd have the upperhand wouldn't you?

SEBASTIAN

Excuse me?

PATRICIA

Why should I get you a stepladder. For all I know you serve society better down there. I mean if you can't even get yourself out of a ditch.

SEBASTIAN

A pit!

PATRICIA

How'd you fall there in the first place? Maybe a man who has found his way to the depths of a "pit" has reason. Perhaps fate has played a hand, or if one can't find his way out then perhaps this would be nature's choice.

SEBASTIAN

What?

PATRICIA

You're the weak calf in the herd.

SEBASTIAN

(Beat)

Are you going to help me? You could find someone if you're not up to task.

PATRICIA

You're not so bright are you? I'm talking survival of the fittest. Perhaps you're not fit for saving. I'm going to be on my way now and pretend this encounter never happened and should I meet you again, then I shall know that indeed you were clever enough to lift yourself out of a dreadful situation. And for that moment I will grant you light applause. Then I will instantly forget you again. Until then, I am sorry but our business has concluded.

SEBASTIAN

You're joking right? Have you heard of loving your neighbor as thyself?

PATRICIA

Good byeee.

SEBASTIAN

For whom?

(Beat)

I hate this pit. I thought it was cool 'cause no one else had one, but this really really sucks.

(End of act.)

ACT II.

SCENE 1

(The pit)

The wind HOWLS increasingly louder. Sounds of branches BREAK and trash barrels ROLL above the pit. Car metal CRUNCHES. Spotlight on a MICROPHONE on a stand in the corner of the stage away from the pit.

RADIO (o.s.)

This is an emergency weather alert. Take cover.
(static sound, spotlight flickers off to darkness)

JOSEPH

(yells to others)
Down here!

One kid jumps into the pit. A lady slides down. They huddle. The wind is still WHISTLING at a full roar and then it gradually dies down. Sebastian stares. The group is wide-eyed.

JOHNNY

Is it over?

JOSEPH

Ya. I think so.

JOHNNY

What's going to happen to all those cars?

JOSEPH

Recycling. Some truck'll come along and scrape that mess together.
Make good use of 'em.

JOHNNY

Wow. Did you see that cow?

JOSEPH

Ya. I think the worst is over now.

PATRICIA

Thank God. I prayed it wouldn't take us.

JOHNNY

Nearly did.

JOSEPH

And then this hole in the ground appeared out of nowhere. Like a burning bush or something.

PATRICIA

It really is a miracle.

SEBASTIAN

(lightly applauds)
All enjoying the pit are you?

All stare.

PATRICIA

Well yes, it saved our lives. All of ours.

SEBASTIAN

We could build a memorial or something. A plaque that says how cool this pit is.

SIRENS are faintly sounding, but get increasingly louder..

JOSEPH

I just want to get the hell outa here and home to my wife.

PATRICIA

Oh god, my estate.

JOSEPH

They call that the eye of the storm.

The males repeatedly try climbing the walls, but slide down.

SEBASTIAN

Look. I could give you a lift. Then the last one out pulls me up. 'right?

PATRICIA

Yes. Good team work idea. I'll go first.

Everyone gets a boost and takes off. JOHNNY is the last one lifted up. He runs off leaving behind SEBASTIAN, alone in the pit.

JOHNNY

Dad! Wait up!

SEBASTIAN

Hey!

A circling ambulance light flashes in the pit. Scanner COMMUNICATION is transmitting an indistinguishable emergency status.

(End of Act.)

ACT III.

SCENE 1

Living room. Lights rise quickly after close of Act II. Sounds from the previous Act persist. Ambulance lights circle through the dark room. Sebastian is sitting in a wheelchair.

BOBBY

Dad! Wake up!

SEBASTIAN

Hey!

BOBBY

I think a truck ran the stop light. Cars are piled up. I'm going to check it out. (Runs away)

Sebastian looks around, waking up, moving only his head. Spits in a cup.

SEBASTIAN

Ahh fuck. Fuckedy fuck.

(Fade to blackout. END OF PLAY)