

MY GOOD LEG

A ten-minute play

by

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CHARACTERS

HENRY, early 70s, has only one leg.

TED, 30s, a local TV News reporter.

THE BOY, age 7 or 8, has only one leg.

BILLY, a cameraman, who never speaks.

PLACE: A study in Henry's home.

TIME: Fall 2000

For Mac.

(Henry's home. A study. Henry sits in a chair with his crutch nearby. Ted sits across from him. Both are wearing body microphones. Lights are focused on both of them. Billy the cameraman films them, while he distractedly eats a doughnut.)

HENRY

I never felt whole.

TED

How did it happen? Tell the viewers how it happened.

HENRY

Not very long ago.

TED

You mean, "Not very long ago," you mean that metaphorically, right?

HENRY

Metaphorically?

TED

Not literally. You meant it not literally. 1945 is a long time ago. But to you, because of your.... In any case, 1945 isn't, I guess, all that long ago to you.

HENRY

What do you mean? What's all this talk of 1945?

TED

(To Billy)

Jesus. Cut. (To Henry.) The big one, Henry. WWII. The Great War. The Kick Ass War. The Bring the Boys Back Home War. Not 'Nam, not that Poor Excuse for a War War. The great one.

HENRY

I was in the Army but—

TED

(To Billy)

Good. Roll film. Henry, tell our viewers how you lost your leg in the Great War.

HENRY

The Great War is the first World War.

TED

Tell our viewers how you lost your leg in a war.

HENRY

Ted, I didn't lose my leg in a war.

TED

(To Billy)

JESUS. CUT. Listen Henry, did you not call my producer and tell her you were a Vet who lost a limb in the WWII?

HENRY

Yes.

TED

OK. Then tell me how you lost your leg in the war.

HENRY

I didn't lose my leg in the war. I lied. So you would come.

(Ted becomes an enormous leech.)

TED

(To Billy)

I'm like this close to busting a nut here Billy. How am I supposed to work with this? Huh?

HENRY

You seem to have turned into a leech, Ted.

TED

Yeah, yeah, listen Henry. Dole's got this monument and I promised the station a story on Vets so you gotta work with me, OK? We're talking Bob Dole, Vets, WWII, monuments, death, heroes, lack of limbs. Help me out here.

HENRY

I want to, Ted. I really do.

TED

Great. (To Billy.) Roll. Henry, how did you lose your leg?

HENRY

A doctor. A doctor removed my leg last week.

TED

Good. Now tell us why. Was it some shrapnel you took in the war?

HENRY

No.

TED

Cancer caused by exposure to poisonous gas dropped on you by the Nazis?

HENRY

No.

TED

What was it then?

HENRY

Me. I wanted it removed. My leg was fine, healthy even. I just didn't want it. I didn't like it. So I paid a doctor to take it away.

TED

Holy shit. (To Billy.) Cut. What are you saying here, Henry?

HENRY

I wanted, I need to be an amputee. I didn't like my leg.

TED

Let me get this straight. You didn't like it?

HENRY

No. I never felt like it belonged there.

TED

You got it removed? Chop, chop.

HENRY

Yes.

TED

Amazing. We got ourselves a freak to feed off of here. Men who want to be amputees. This is much better than fucking WWII. Get the station on the phone, Billy, and then we gotta get this on tape.

(Henry has a dream while Ted makes a phone call. A young boy, age 7 or 8, emerges. He walks on a crutch.)

THE BOY*(Singing)*

Life isn't a tragedy
 As that jerk Freud once said
 It's a big fuckin' joke
 Beating ya over the head
 Hey, look at me
 I only got one leg.

*(The boy laughs.)***THE BOY**

I believe that too. Freud was wrong. Why should life be a tragedy? Why isn't it a joke? I mean Marx said, "The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." But I'll tell you something, the very first thing's a farce. It's all a farce of a farce of a farce, ad infinitum.

HENRY

You are only seven, maybe eight, and you are already beautiful with a head like an acorn and as smart as a nut.

THE BOY

I got lots of free time. I read a lot. Chicks don't dig kids with one leg after a certain age.

HENRY

I dig you.

THE BOY

That's cool.

HENRY

How does it feel?

THE BOY

What? Not having a leg?

HENRY

Yeah.

THE BOY

Don't know. Can't remember having one.

HENRY

I don't like mine.

Your leg?

THE BOY

Yeah.

HENRY

Can I have it?

THE BOY

*(Henry's eyes light up. They are in love. They kiss.
The dream is over.)*

TED

Um, let me see Henry. You had the hots for a boy with one leg when you were a kid?

HENRY

You make it sound tawdry.

TED

And then some 60 odd years later you get your leg removed because you feel it doesn't belong. Some sort of repression, maybe, repressing your love for this one-legged boy?

HENRY

No. Yes. No. Yes, I suppose. I guess. I don't know. He was a special boy.

TED

Awesome. This will definitely be on before the weather.

HENRY

But I'm happy. You've gotta show your viewers that, OK?

TED

Happy? No, you don't understand. America doesn't like happy freaks, only sad ones.

HENRY

But I'm not—

TED

Cry.

HENRY

What?

TED

Cry. You gotta cry for me. On tape.

HENRY

But why—

TED

Cry. Or else no story. No TV story about you. You got me?

HENRY

OK.

(Henry starts to cry. Ted attaches his sucking mechanisms to Henry and sucks him dry. Henry is now only a dried husk.)

TED

Now we got a story.

(The boy emerges and kills Ted the leech. And then dead Henry opens his eyes and the boy gets a second leg.)

THE BOY

Ah, the joys of love.

(Unfazed, Billy eats another doughnut.)

(Blackout.)