

the beginning of

ALL THAT HE CAN BE (from **FUNNY AS A CRUTCH**)

a short play by Rich Orloff

Time: The present

Place: An Army recruiting station

Characters: ZACK, a young man with gusto (and one leg)

RECRUITER, an Army officer

ZACK'S DAD, Zack's father

An Army recruiting station. The RECRUITER sits at his desk. ZACK, a zestful, energized young man enters. From appearance, there's nothing unusual about him.

ZACK

I want to be all that I can be!

RECRUITER

(matching his energy)

Then you've come to the right place. Come right in!

ZACK

Sign me up!

RECRUITER

You *are* eager, aren't you?

ZACK

You bet. My dad was in the Army, my granddad was in the Army, and my great-granddad was in the Army. Now it's my turn. Where do I sign?

RECRUITER

Hold on, tiger. First I have to ask some questions.

ZACK

Fire away!... See how I've got the lingo down?

RECRUITER

Very impressive. But you know, joining the Army is a serious matter.

ZACK

I know, sir.

RECRUITER

Are you willing to endure hardship?

ZACK

Yes.

RECRUITER

Are you ready to test your mettle?

ZACK

You bet.

RECRUITER

Are you willing to risk life and limb
for the sake of your country?

ZACK

All the ones I have left.

RECRUITER

Pardon me?

ZACK

Any limb I have is Uncle Sam's.

RECRUITER

And how many limbs might that be?

ZACK

Flesh and blood, three. State-of-the-art
metallic alloy, one.

RECRUITER

Excuse me?

ZACK

Two years ago, I lost my right leg in a car accident.

RECRUITER

Oh.

ZACK

I only mention it because I figure someone
would notice during the physical.

RECRUITER

You only have one leg.

ZACK

Only in the traditional sense. Depending on how you look at it, I have several.

RECRUITER

I don't follow.

ZACK

(revealing his artificial leg:)

You see, this leg is an all-purpose, everyday leg.

RECRUITER

You have a separate one for dress-up?

ZACK

No, but I have one for jogging, and another for rock-climbing.

RECRUITER

You sound like you're very physical.

ZACK

I don't see why I shouldn't be.

RECRUITER

(thinks, then:)

Ohhh. Did Lieutenant Lawrence set you up for this?

ZACK

What?

RECRUITER

I bet it was Sergeant Bruno.

ZACK

What are you talking about?

RECRUITER

You really had me going there for a second.

ZACK

Sir, I want to serve my country. And I believe I'm as capable as any man of doing so.

RECRUITER

You're – you're serious, aren't you?

ZACK

Yes, sir.

RECRUITER

Look, son, I'm sorry, but the military has strict rules about these things: You don't have enough legs to join the Army.

ZACK

You want I should pack a spare?

RECRUITER

Enough *real* legs.

ZACK

How about this: We'll consider my leg like it's a gay thing.

RECRUITER

What?

ZACK

If nobody asks, I won't tell.

RECRUITER

Army policy: All soldiers need two legs.

ZACK

This is the best leg money can buy.

RECRUITER

But it's not the same as a human leg.

ZACK

I know. It comes with a warranty.

RECRUITER

Look, I'm sure it's a fine leg, but –

ZACK

Imagine the average guy on the front line gets shot in the leg. "Oh, no! It hurts, it hurts! *Medic!!!*" Now imagine this leg gets shot. "Hey, get me some duct tape!" Isn't that better?