

the beginning of

TOES (from **FUNNY AS A CRUTCH**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

Time: The present

Place: The kitchen

Characters: SHEILA, who turns 21 today
LEONARD, her boyfriend, the same age
MOM and DAD, Sheila's parents

As the scene begins, MOM places 21 candles on a birthday cake.
Off-stage, we hear people in the living room.

SHEILA (o.s.)
Hi, Daddy.

DAD (o.s.)
Hi, precious.

LEONARD (o.s.)
Hello, Mr. Slapperschmurg.

DAD (o.s.)
Hello, Leonard.

SHEILA (o.s.)
You look good, Daddy.

DAD (o.s.)
Come on in the kitchen. And be sure
to compliment the birthday cake your
mother made, no matter what it looks like.

SHEILA, LEONARD and DAD enter.

SHEILA
Hi, Mom.

MOM
Hello, darling dearest. Hi, Leonard.

LEONARD
Hello, Mrs. Slapperschmurg.

LEONARD and SHEILA

What a lovely cake.

MOM

Oh, you're just saying that.

LEONARD and SHEILA

(choose some phrases and overlap:)

Oh, no. Not at all. I wouldn't do that.

Of course not. No way. (etc.)

DAD

It's always so good to see you two.

MOM

Let us look at you.

Sheila and Leonard pose. Mom and Dad stare at them.

LEONARD

(between his teeth:)

Is this long enough?

MOM

Not yet.

LEONARD

(between his teeth:)

My right leg's falling asleep.

SHEILA

My left brain's falling asleep.

DAD

(to Mom, re Sheila:)

She's been losing weight, hasn't she?

MOM

She's been losing weight since she was born.

SHEILA

Mom!

MOM

Okay, we're done.

DAD

So how's my precious princess, the love of my life, my pride and joy, my rock and my redeemer.

SHEILA

I'm fine, Dad.

MOM

And how are you, her noble boyfriend?

LEONARD

I'm fine, Mrs. Slapperschmurg.

DAD

And to think, today's my precious princess' 21st birthday. Doesn't it feel like we brought her home from the hospital just yesterday?

MOM

More like an hour-and-a-half ago.

DAD

Yeah.

MOM

I still feel post-natal depression.

SHEILA

Mom, Dad, today, on the occasion of my entrance into adulthood, Leonard and I have something very special we want to tell you.

MOM

What is it, you two adorable examples of youth?

LEONARD

Mr. Slapperschmurg, Mrs. Slapperschmurg, I'd like your permission to marry your daughter.

DAD

Oh, no.

MOM

Oh, no, no, no.

SHEILA

Why not?!

MOM

We'd rather not discuss it.

DAD

Seen any good movies lately?

MOM

We haven't, but we've seen some excellent trailers.

LEONARD

You know, Mr. Slapperschmurg, Mrs. Slapperschmurg,
I do make a good living.

DAD

We know that.

LEONARD

I'm smart and good-looking.

MOM

We know that.

SHEILA

He's a fine, decent man whom I love dearly.

DAD

We love him like a son.

MOM

We just don't want him as a son-in-law.

SHEILA

But why?

Mom and Dad look at each other for a moment and shrug,
as if to say, "I guess we have to tell her."

DAD

It's... it's the toe thing.

SHEILA

What toe thing?

MOM

The toe thing.

LEONARD

You mean, the fact that I only have nine toes?

DAD

Do you have to be so graphic?!

LEONARD

I can do everything a ten-toed person can do.

MOM

You've done a fine job of overcoming your affliction.

SHEILA

What's the big deal about his toes?
Most people don't even notice.

DAD

We've noticed.

MOM

I remember when the four of us went
on that picnic. When Leonard took off
his shoes and I saw his prosthetic toe...
I can't tell you how much I cried.

SHEILA

I never saw you cry.

MOM

I cried inside. Outside, I drank Diet Cokes.