

the beginning of

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

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

Time: Once upon a time

Place: A kingdom far away

Characters: THE ROYAL SCRIBE

CRIPPERELLA*

GWENDLYFARK and SMEGMATINA, her stepsisters

FAIRY GODMOTHER

THE KING

THE QUEEN

THE PRINCE*

and one quick off-stage voice.

*If this play is paired with **TOTALLY ACCESSIBLE**, *Cripperella* and the Prince should be played by the actors who play Ivy and Brian in **TOTALLY ACCESSIBLE**.

CRIPPERELLA can be performed with a cast of five (or more), with actors playing multiple roles, not necessarily of their own gender.

As the play begins, the **ROYAL SCRIBE** welcomes the audience:

ROYAL SCRIBE

As the royal scribe in a kingdom long ago and far away, I have witnessed many great stories. But none do I enjoy telling as much as the one I'm about to tell you now.

Once upon a time, or three hours later on the West Coast, lived a sweet young maiden named *Cripperella*, who shared a cottage with her two able-bodied but personality-impaired stepsisters, *Gwendlyfark* and *Smegmatina*, who were busy getting ready for a royal ball.

In a medieval cottage, *GWENDLYFARK* and *SMEGMATINA* rush about frantically. *CRIPPERELLA*, who is in a wheelchair, tries to get a word in but can't.

GWENDLYFARK

Cripperella, I need your help.

CRIPPERELLA

Yes, but –

SMEGMATINA

I need your help more.

GWENDLYFARK
You're beyond help. Now Cripperella –

CRIPPERELLA
Look –

SMEGMATINA
I asked her first.

GWENDLYFARK
No, I asked her first.

SMEGMATINA
Well, I tried to ask her first, but
your tongue wags faster than mine.

GWENDLYFARK
(to Cripperella:)
So are you going to help me or not?

CRIPPERELLA
Okay, Gwendlyfark, what do you want?

GWENDLYFARK
I need some last-minute mending.

CRIPPERELLA
Could you get the sewing kit?

GWENDLYFARK
Do I have to do *everything* around here?

CRIPPERELLA
But you keep putting it on that
high shelf. I can't reach it.

GWENDLYFARK
It's not my fault. That's where
God wants the shelf to be.

SMEGMATINA
Cripperella, I need you to zip up my gown.

CRIPPERELLA
I can only do one thing at a time, Smegmatina.

SMEGMATINA
That's because you're crippled.

GWENDLYFARK

And you can do two things at a time?

SMEGMATINA

Of course I can.

GWENDLYFARK

Like what?

SMEGMATINA

I can whine incessantly while
admiring myself in the mirror.

GWENDLYFARK

Cripperella, I need that mending.

SMEGMATINA

I need to be zipped.

CRIPPERELLA

Come here. Now exhale.

The zipper won't move.

CRIPPERELLA (cont'd)

Exhale more.

The zipper still won't move.

CRIPPERELLA (cont'd)

Still more... Now raise your arms, exhale
more, and stand on your toes... Great.
Now while you're up there, get the sewing kit.

Smegmatina grabs the sewing kit. Cripperella zips her up.

CRIPPERELLA (cont'd)

There we go. Are you sure this
gown isn't too constricting for you?

SMEGMATINA

(her voice constricted)

It's fine.

GWENDLYFARK

I don't see why you bother shoveling
yourself into that dress. The Prince
will only have eyes for me.

SMEGMATINA

Great; I'll take the rest of him.

CRIPPERELLA

What's the big deal about the Prince? He's just a guy.

SMEGMATINA

What part of the word "prince" don't you understand?

GWENDLYFARK

Besides, this is his royal "coming out" party.

SMEGMATINA

And he's looking for a bride.

GWENDLYFARK

Someone like me.

SMEGMATINA

Or even better, me.

CRIPPERELLA

Is he nice?

GWENDLYFARK

He's rich, single, and going to be king.

SMEGMATINA

He's damn nice.

CRIPPERELLA

I wish I were invited to the ball.

GWENDLYFARK

Get real.

CRIPPERELLA

I'm real. I'm the most real person I know.

SMEGMATINA

I tried being real once. It wasn't me.

GWENDLYFARK

Oh, look. I think there's our coach.

From offstage, we hear:

COACH (o.s.)

Let's move it. Hup, hup, hup, hup.

GWENDLYFARK

Yep, that's our coach.

SMEGMATINA

Good night, Cripperella. When I come home, I might be a future queen.

GWENDLYFARK

Ha!

SMEGMATINA

You know, you've never complimented me in my entire life.

GWENDLYFARK

How's this: I've noticed men *love* looking at your ass.

SMEGMATINA

I thought so.

Smegmatina exits.

GWENDLYFARK

'Cause when they see it, they know you're leaving.

Gwendlyfark exits.

ROYAL SCRIBE

The two stepsisters went to the ball, and Cripperella was left all alone. Fortunately, she was not one to ever feel sorry for herself.

CRIPPERELLA

I feel so sorry for myself.

ROYAL SCRIBE

So I'm wrong. Then a wondrous thing happened.

A doorbell chimes.

CRIPPERELLA

That's funny. I don't think they've invented doorbells yet.

Cripperella's FAIRY GODMOTHER enters.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

I know. That was just one of those magical things I do.

CRIPPERELLA

Who are you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER

I'm your fairy godmother.

CRIPPERELLA

You are?

FAIRY GODMOTHER

Yes, I'm like the world's best social service agency, but without red tape.