

# JUMPING

A Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by  
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**CAST: JERRY and DENISE**

**\*Though sound effects and props are helpful, they aren't necessary. Props can easily be mimed.**

**SETTING: A bridge.**

**AT RISE: JERRY stands, looking down at the floor, as if HE were standing on a bridge. A chair or table should be used to represent the railing of the bridge. JERRY looks anxiously toward the unseen water below. HE is dressed in a light overcoat or jacket.**

JERRY: **(Shivering, cold. Sound effect of wind)** Cold. **(Pause)** Dark. **(Pause)** Can't even see the river below. Just as well. **(Pause)** Might as well get it over with. **(Grunts as HE climbs onto railing)** Wait a minute. Something's wrong. I'm not doing it right. **(Climbs down onto bridge)** I'll leave my coat. People are always leaving their coats. **(Takes off coat) (Pauses)** And shoes. They leave their shoes. **(Starts taking off shoes)** I don't know why. You'd think if you left your coat and shoes on, you'd sink faster. But in the movies, they're always taking off their coat and.... **(Has trouble with a shoestring)** Knot in my shoestring. It's not my day. **(Gets shoe off)** There we go. I'm ready. Wish I could see down there. Black as death. **(Pause. Weak laugh. Shiver)** Better jump before I freeze to death. **(Pause)** Here we go! **(Climbs onto railing)** How's anybody going to know I jumped? Know it's me? **(Pause)** I...I need some I.D. **(Climbing back onto bridge)** Forgot my wallet. Dental records? Never had my teeth X-rayed. I was afraid of cancer. A note! Yes! That'll show her. A note.... **(Patting pockets, looking for paper, etc.)** No paper.... No pencil.... **(Frantic)** What am I going to do! **(DENISE enters, starts to walk past, stops a moment, then starts off again)** Excuse—

**(DENISE short scream)**

JERRY: —me.

**(DENISE not quite so frightened gasp)**

JERRY: Would you happen to have a—

DENISE: Where's your coat?

JERRY: Right here. A piece of paper? A—

**(Sound effect of wind, howling)**

DENISE: **(Over wind)** Put on your coat!

JERRY: **(Over wind)** It doesn't matter....

DENISE: Where are your shoes!

JERRY: I don't care about—

DENISE: Put on your shoes!

JERRY: I need to write a note!

DENISE: Put on your clothes! **(JERRY puts on coat and shoes) (Over wind)** It's forty below, wind chill.

JERRY: I still haven't figured out this wind chill business....

DENISE: You'll catch your death of a cold. **(JERRY laughs bitterly)** Pneumonia!

**(Wind dies down. Occasional gusts should be heard)**

JERRY: Do you have a pen?

DENISE: Frostbite!

JERRY: Scrap of paper?

DENISE: I'm sure I do...someplace in this purse.... **(Searches in purse)** Bronchitis!

JERRY: Pencil?

DENISE: Hold these keys... **(Hands him keys)** Book... **(Hands him book)** Make-up... **(Hands him make-up)** You're not even wearing a parka!

JERRY: A napkin to write on.

DENISE: Look at this coat I'm wearing! I can hardly move!

JERRY: A pin to prick my finger.

DENISE: Massive hypothermia!

JERRY: Doesn't scare me. Not anymore. Cancer? Smoking? Radioactivity? Microwave ovens? I'm past all that.

DENISE: Here's a pen. **(Takes pen, still holding her stuff)**

JERRY: Thanks. Saved my life. **(Pause)** So to speak.

DENISE: Past?

JERRY: **(looks)** Here's a piece of paper, under the socks in your purse. **(Grabs paper)**

DENISE: No—

JERRY: I'll write on the back.

DENISE: No!

JERRY: I have to have it! **(Tears paper in half)** It'll be a short note. Short and...bitter.

DENISE: You're past all what?

JERRY: Everything. I don't care anymore.

DENISE: Care about—?

JERRY: I'm past caring. Open your purse.

DENISE: Why?

JERRY: So I can put this stuff back in.

DENISE: That's despicable.

JERRY: What? **(HE dumps items into purse)**

DENISE: Not caring.

JERRY: Would you mind turning around?

DENISE: Why?

JERRY: So I can write on your back.

DENISE: No public spirit! **(SHE turns and HE tries to use her back as a writing support)**

JERRY: It's not that.

DENISE: No political consciousness!

JERRY: No, you see...

DENISE: No democratic responsibility!

JERRY: Could you hold still?

DENISE: You should be ashamed!

JERRY: I can't write—

DENISE: Haven't you ever stood up for what you believed in?

JERRY: Maybe on my knee... **(Bends on one knee and tries to write using knee for support)**

DENISE: Haven't you ever died for a cause?

JERRY: I can't write while you're yelling!

DENISE: Are you registered to vote!

JERRY: No!

DENISE: You're just like him.

JERRY: Who?

DENISE: Never mind. **(JERRY stands and starts to move away)** Where are you going?

JERRY: **(slightly off)** Find a place to write. Only take a minute. I could write volumes...but...my fingers are numb.

DENISE: **(turning to him)** Where are your mittens!

JERRY: I don't have mittens!

DENISE: Where do you think you are? Florida?

JERRY: San Francisco. That's where I used to live.

### **(Wind gusts)**

DENISE: Look at my mittens. These are mittens. Fur on the inside. Fur on the outside. Thinsulate in between. I'm still cold. Would you like to join the Sierra Club? I have an application in my purse. **(Going through purse)** Could you hold these again? **(Gives him keys and other items which HE reluctantly holds)**

JERRY: I'm really cold....

DENISE: I know it's in here. **(More stuff from purse, things drop to the floor of bridge)** Oh dear.

JERRY: I'll help you. **(More stuff drops)** My fingers won't move.

DENISE: Here it is! **(Pause)** Well? **(Pause)** Aren't you going to fill it out?

JERRY: Could you mail it to me?

DENISE: Certainly. **(Pause)** Give me your name and address.

JERRY: Do you have a piece of paper?

DENISE: I think so... **(Rummaging in purse)**

JERRY: Pen?

DENISE: You have my pen.

JERRY: So I do! **(They laugh)** I'm a little distracted tonight.

DENISE: So am I!

JERRY: You too?

DENISE: Distracted...upset...furious! When I'm upset... about personal matters, I get involved politically. When I was younger, when my fiancé left me at the altar, I joined Greenpeace. It takes my mind off my own troubles. **(Sound of wind up slowly)** If we had more personal problems, people would get more involved in politics. Don't you think?

**(Wind howls)**

JERRY: **(shivering)** I suppose.

DENISE: **(over wind)** If everybody's personal life was a mess, we could have real democracy! We could solve the world's problems! You're turning blue. Take my coat. **(Removing coat)**

JERRY: No, I couldn't. You'll freeze.

DENISE: We'll take turns...

JERRY: My name's Jerry. With a J.

**(JERRY puts on coat)**

DENISE: Denise. With a D. Where's your parka?

JERRY: I don't have a parka. I just moved to Minnesota a few months ago. From San Francisco. This is my first winter. And my last.

DENISE: **(shivering)** Don't you like it here?

JERRY: It's not that. It's a personal problem.

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