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Dramatic Publishing



Double Mandible

by
Julie Jensen

From...

35 in 10

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



Dramatic Publishing

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DOUBLE MANDIBLE

By
Julie Jensen

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Double Mandible (originally entitled **Water Lilies**) was commissioned by Salt Lake Acting Company in 2001. It appeared on a bill with ten other short plays by Utah writers, produced January 24, 2002, as part of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. It also appeared in a volume of plays entitled *Cabbies, Cowboys and the Tree of the Weeping Virgin*, privately published, to commemorate Salt Lake Acting Company's contribution to the Olympic celebration.

CHARACTERS

BETTY: An enthusiastic, yet nervous water ballerina.
Twin to Bella.

BELLA: A desultory, long-suffering water ballerina. Twin to Betty.

SETTING: The pool at the Olympics. The in-water segments should be performed behind a shoulder-high curtain. Mannequin legs can be used for some of the water ballet stunts.

COSTUMES: Both actors are dressed exactly alike: swimming suits, nose plugs, lots of makeup and lacquered hair. Each of them should also wear a large waterlily on top of her head.

DOUBLE MANDIBLE

AT THE CURTAIN: *It is a dark stage. SPOTLIGHT on BETTY. She is in front of a microphone.*

Part I: Before Competition

BETTY (*to AUDIENCE*). Many people have asked me, “What is it with this water ballet?” And I am proud to answer. Water ballet has made America great. For example, water ballet incorporates all other sports—water sports and artistry sports. Go ahead, step right up, name any sport, any sport at all, and water ballet will incorporate some of its features.

BELLA (*off*). Weightlifting.

BETTY (*to AUDIENCE, as if someone in the house answered*). Weightlifting. Yes!

BELLA (*off*). Marathon running.

BETTY (*again, as if another person in the house answered*). Marathon running. Yes!

BELLA (*off*). Greco Roman wrestling.

BETTY (*to AUDIENCE*). Greco Roman wrestling. Yes!
You see what I mean!

(*BELLA enters. She is carrying some gear.*)

BELLA (*to AUDIENCE*). That is my sister. She has a reputation for intensity.

BETTY (*to AUDIENCE*). ...What is more, ladies and gentlemen, water ballet is also the *first* art form. Before

there was ground ballet, there was water ballet. But even before that. Before the human race walked on two legs, there was water ballet. Swimming around in the primordial ooze, there was water ballet. The little mermaids and the little mermen, no feet, just fins. They had water ballet.

BELLA (*to AUDIENCE*). As you can tell, my sister is known for her passionate defense of her career. Our career.

BETTY (*to AUDIENCE*). ...In conclusion, my fellow Americans, may I add the following: water ballet is not the thing that separates us from the animal kingdom, no, it is the thing that connects us to it. Thank you so very much. (*BETTY curtsies.*) Oh, and one more thing. I'm proud to be a waterlily. Proud, proud, proud.

(*SPOTLIGHT out. BELLA claps. LIGHTS up.*)

BETTY. Bella, for the love of Jesus, where have you been?

BELLA. I went to a movie.

BETTY. And left me to do the entire press corps by myself.

BELLA. I had to get my mind off things.

BETTY. You also missed our morning practice.

BELLA. No I didn't. I was at practice for the next part of my life.

BETTY. Bella! *This is the Olympics!*

BELLA. I had to get my mind off it.

BETTY. We are going to fail to medal because of you.