

FIREFLIES

By Pat Morgan

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****Through portraying an old couple, both parts are designed to be performed by students.****

CAST: NAOMI and JIM

AT RISE: NAOMI is rocking in her chair on the porch. SHE can either be knitting, or SHE can mime the activity.

NAOMI: Jim, can you get the phone? Jim, I'm out here on the porch.
The phone...

JIM: **(off-stage, or near the edge)** Hello. Hi, sweetheart. How's my girl? And that grandson of mine? **(Throughout this phone conversation, Naomi keeps her ears perked up and doesn't say a word.)** Well, no, I...Well, honey, what on earth's got you so upset? **(listens a moment)** You don't mean to tell? You talkin' 'bout that skinny, ole' redhead down at Dairy Queen? **(beat)** Well, what did Harley have to say about all this? **(beat)** Well, that boy has got some explainin' to do to somebody! **(beat)** You can just bet on that! Shirley, in the meantime, you better move yourself and little Joey on over here to the house until we can just get this mess straightened out. **(beat)** What's that? Your mother? Why, she's on the porch. Yes, why, I'll tell her. And you start puttin' some things in a suitcase and I'll pick you up in the mornin'. **(beat)** Yes, honey, I'll be there first thing in the mornin'. An' you tell that Harley, he's goin' to have to DEAL WITH ME. **(JIM hangs up the phone, enters right onto the porch and sits down in the empty rocker.)**

NAOMI: **(in a light, carefree manner. SHE continues knitting)** Sure is pretty out come evening.

JIM: Hmmmmmmmmm.

NAOMI: Look there, fireflies is startin' up. Over the oleanders. There's one - there's some more. An' there's goin' to be more starts n' you can count tonight.

JIM: Hmmmm. You talk to Shirley today?

NAOMI: **(light)** No. I believe it was yesterday. **(beat)** Oh, it'll calm down. Don't think there's much to it.

JIM: Not much to it!?! Woman, what's it take to convince you there's somthin' to a problem? Why, Shirley's out the house cryin' her eyes out...**(NAOMI looks calm)** What you know about all this?

NAOMI: Not much. Seems Harley didn't come home Tuesday night 'til real late. Had to work over at the school on the Passion Play. **(beat)**

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Look, there, over by the fence. Fireflies is lighting up the whole yard tonight. Don't last long after that, ya' know. Real shame. It's almost like...

JIM: (**interrupting and in her face**) Naomi, I'm not talkin' about Harley teachin' nights down at the school. I'm talkin' about Harley chasin' the skirt down at the Dairy Queen.

NAOMI: Well, I don't think...

JIM: (**again interrupting**) Think, nothing! Harley Daggert's been chasin' skirts since Hagar was a pup. Heard he was in some kind of trouble way before he started up with Shirley. Even heard talk about him getting one of them VanDuser girls in trouble.

NAOMI: Oh, that was just talk, Jim Bottoms, and you know it. Why, Harley may have played the fool in years past, but that was way before our Shirley. And he was young. Young men have a habit of making fools of themselves. Besides, this just ain't any of our business. Probably by tomorrow they'll be...

JIM: This is our business!

NAOMI: Jim, about tomorrow...

JIM: Now, don't you go on...

NAOMI: I just think we should give this time before we start interfering.

JIM: I ain't interfering, if that's what you're getting' at. (**JIM rises and crosses to center stage**)

NAOMI: Well, going over there and packing Shirley and the baby up is a far stretch from *mindin' your own business*.

JIM: (**again in her face**) He was seen, Naomi. Seen, I tell ya. Maybell Thatcher seen 'em parked out behind the Dairy Queen after they closed it down.

NAOMI: (**mocking**) And just how'd our Shirley find out about all this? Maybell doin' her Christian duty, no doubt.

JIM: Well, she did call Shirley.

NAOMI: I'm sure she did. She bein' so well-meanin' an' all.

JIM: Now, what's that supposed to mean?

NAOMI: (**lightly**) I mean, that I remember back when Sybil Ann Cockran took it on herself to call me about Donna Mayberry. (**beat**)

JIM: Donna Mayberry?

NAOMI: Donna Mayberry! (**beat**)

JIM: I don't recall no Mayberry's.

NAOMI: That so?

JIM: Yes, *that's so*. And what'd Sybil Ann Cockran have to call you about, anyway?

NAOMI: You good 'en well what Sybil Ann Cockran had to tell me about Donna Mayberry. (**beat**)

JIM: Seems I recall Mayberry's up around Cut and Shoot. That the same clan?

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NAOMI: Maybe. But this Mayberry was working at Jeffer's Five and Dime and *flingin'* herself all over town.

JIM: Hummmmm. **(2 beats)** I see what you mean about the fireflies...buzzin' all over the place.

NAOMI: Yep. It's relaxin' somehow. **(pauses, as SHE puts down her knittin')** Look here, Jim Bottoms, I've raised just about all the kids I intend to although I just love that little Joey to death, his place is with his folks. *Both his folks.*

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