

FIRE BALL

By Lindsay Price

CHARACTERS

Jennine – Gerry's girlfriend (20's)
Gerry – Jennine's boyfriend (20's)

SETTING

A living room. All you need is a couch.

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The scene is a living room. JENNINE is sitting on a couch reading. Offstage there is the sound of a door slam.

JENNINE: Hi honey! Did you find something? Your mother called about ten minutes ago.
(There is no answer.) Did you hear me? *(There is no answer. JENNINE looks up)* Gerry?
Is that you? *(JENNINE looks off)*

GERRY: *(still offstage)* Don't get upset.

JENNINE: *(getting off the couch)* What happened?

GERRY: Just promise me you won't get upset.

JENNINE: Did you wreck the car? Gerry I have to go to yoga tonight, I've missed three classes already and my meditation pose is shot to hell.

GERRY: *(entering)* The car's fine.

GERRY enters. His sweater has a huge hole in the centre of it. You can see his skin. The skin has scorch marks on it, as does the edges of the hole. It looks like someone held a fireball to GERRY'S chest. JENNINE lets out a scream and stops herself by putting a hand to her mouth.

GERRY: Don't get upset.

JENNINE: Oh my God.

GERRY: Don't get upset.

JENNINE: Oh my God. Oh my God, Oh my God!

GERRY: Jennine!

JENNINE: What happened? *(she goes to touch his chest)*

GERRY: Don't touch it! It's tender.

JENNINE: There's a hole in your chest. There's a hole. In your chest.

GERRY: Don't get upset.

JENNINE: Don't get upset? You're burned! You're smouldering! You're – are you in pain?
Come sit down.

GERRY: I'm fine.

JENNINE: You need to sit down. You're in shock. That's why you think you're fine when you're obviously not fine. Do you need a doctor? Obviously you need a doctor. I have to call a doctor. Who's our doctor? Gerry, I can't think. I can't think, what's the name of our doctor!!

GERRY: Hazleton.

JENNINE: Hazleton. Hazleton. Of course it is. Hazleton, Hazleton, Hazleton. Where's the phone. Where's the phone? What the hell happened to the phone!

GERRY: Jennine! I don't need a doctor.

JENNINE: What are you talking about! Your skin looks like it's been on a barbeque! I don't know why you're not screaming in pain right now. I'd be screaming. I'd be freaking right out of my mind right about now if I came home with a burning hole in my chest. Is that the sweater my mother gave you for Christmas?

GERRY: Jennine! Please. I need you to be calm right now. See how I am? *(he breathes)*

JENNINE: *(she breathes)* I am calm.

GERRY: *(he breathes)* Good.

JENNINE: *(she breathes)* I'm a calm person.

GERRY: I know.

JENNINE: Everyone says so.

GERRY: I know.

JENNINE: Who's the person who handles crises at work?

GERRY: You do.

JENNINE: Who gave a last minute presentation on the minimum payment calculation for the conversion of a Registered Pension Plan into a Locked in Retirement income fund this week?

GERRY: You did.

JENNINE: Was I calm or upset?

GERRY: Calm.

JENNINE: Exactly. But this is...this is different.

GERRY: Jennine.

JENNINE: You've got a hole Gerry a hole! In your chest! And it's burning! Your sweater is burned! You've got a hole as big as my fist in your sweater, in your chest! It's bigger than my fist. Gerry that hole is bigger than my fist, it's bigger than my –

GERRY: Jennine!

JENNINE: I'm calm, I'm calm. I'm very calm.

GERRY: Breathe. Take some nice deep breaths.

JENNINE: Nice calm breaths. Jennine is a calm person and she takes calm breaths.

GERRY: Good. Now. I can explain. It's crazy. It's....way out there crazy. But I can explain and the best thing for you to do is sit quietly while I explain and not get upset.

JENNINE: I am calm and I am not upset.

GERRY: Do we have a deal?

JENNINE: I am sitting quietly.

GERRY: Wonderful.

JENNINE: Are you sure you don't want some ointment or cream or a band-aid or –

GERRY: Jennine!

JENNINE: I am sitting quietly.

GERRY: As you know, I went out to the new Mega Shelf this afternoon.

JENNINE: I am aware of this.

GERRY: To look at shelves.

JENNINE: Because your mother needs some.

GERRY: Yes.

JENNINE: To properly display her snow globe collection.

GERRY: Yes.

JENNINE: Because it's getting out of hand.

GERRY: Yes.

JENNINE: Did you find anything?

GERRY: Oh yeah. They don't call it Mega Shelf for nothing. I've never seen so many different types of shelves. There were forty different kinds of corner glass display units alone! The snow globes are going to look fantastic.

JENNINE: That's nice. She'll be happy.

GERRY: Very happy. *(there is a pause)*

JENNINE: And this has what to do with the smoldering hole in your chest?

GERRY: Well.... I was exiting the Mega Shelf, confident in the knowledge that I was going to be able to suggest suitable shelving for the snow globes, when it happened.

JENNINE: What?

GERRY: It.

JENNINE: What?

GERRY: It! First I heard a noise. Like a screaming only there wasn't anybody screaming.

JENNINE: What was it?

GERRY: I looked to the left and to the right. Left and right, left and right and behind. I looked behind me, in front, and under the car. I stood on my tiptoes and looked across the parking lot. Nothing. And the noise kept getting louder and louder.

JENNINE: What did you do?

GERRY: I looked up.

JENNINE: Up?

GERRY: Up. The last option available to me. I looked up and there it was. Coming out of the sky. Fast. Screaming through the sky and now I could smell it. Sulphur and ash and fire and smoke. And people were screaming. Screaming and running. All around me patrons of the Mega Shelf were running – as fast as one can run while carrying shelves – People running through the smoke, running for their lives!

JENNINE: What was it?

GERRY: You're not going to believe it Jennine. I thought it was a mirage or a mistake or maybe I was losing my mind. But there for all the world to see (*he points up*), there it was!

JENNINE: What?

GERRY: A fireball.

JENNINE: A fireball?

GERRY: Headed straight for the Mega Shelf parking lot. It was chaos Jennine. Screaming, smoke, ash, fire, running – and I was frozen to the spot. I couldn't move.

JENNINE: (*a little less upset*) Maybe you should have moved.

GERRY: I couldn't. I couldn't because that fireball was headed straight for me! The sweater your mother gave me for Christmas had a big x on it and that fireball wanted to mark the spot!

JENNINE: Uh huh.

GERRY: WHAM! I'm hit! WHAM! I'm thrown to the ground! There I was on the ground underneath a FLAMING fireball. Oh it burned Jennine. Oh how it burned. Right through this poor defenceless sweater!

JENNINE: My goodness.

GERRY: Thank God I had the presence of mind to pull the FLAMING fireball off my chest and FLING it away before it did any permanent damage to my skin or vital organs.

JENNINE: Hmm.

GERRY: It's amazing that fireball didn't take my life! But I'm here Jennine. It's all right, baby, it's all right I'm here and I'm ok. The only casualty is this sweater.

JENNINE: Well. Isn't that a miracle.

GERRY pauses a moment in his oratorio and looks at JENNINE. She is sitting on the couch with her arms folded. She doesn't look too happy.

GERRY: What. What?

JENNINE: What?

GERRY: *(sitting beside JENNINE)* You do believe me don't you?

JENNINE moves close and pokes GERRY in the chest.

GERRY: Ow! What'd you do that for?

JENNINE: It just seems to me.... *(she pokes again)*

GERRY: Ow! Cut it out!

JENNINE: If you drop something from the atmosphere, I guess that's where your fireball came from, if you drop something from that high, a little acrylic and the presence of mind of a weasely little man –

GERRY: Hey, hey, hey! I'm on death's door here!

JENNINE: It just makes sense; if you drop a fireball from that high nothing's going to stop said fireball from burning a hole right through said chest and coming out the other side. You must have superhuman skin or something. *(she now starts to look at GERRY's hands)*

GERRY: Here I am, virtually burned to death and – now what are you looking for?

JENNINE: The burn marks on your hands.

GERRY: *(yanking hands away)* All right, all right.

JENNINE: It's only logical. If you're going to pull a screaming, smoking, FLAMING fireball off your chest....

GERRY: You've made your point.

JENNINE: It's only logical that –

GERRY: I get it. I get it. You don't believe me. Fine. When the reporters and the photographers and the paparazzi come flashing round here you'll be sorry. I'll be a hero and you'll be plain old sorry Jennine.

JENNINE: Who is she?

GERRY: Who is who?

JENNINE: The girl.

GERRY: What girl?

JENNINE: The girl.

GERRY: I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

JENNINE: You saw a girl at the Mega Shelf and you burned a hole in your sweater.

GERRY: What?

JENNINE: You burned up from the inside. You saw a girl felt a rush of lust and... Roast Gerry.

GERRY: You're crackers.

JENNINE: That's what it was, wasn't it.

GERRY: Cuckoo! You're cuckoo!!

JENNINE: You lusted after someone. You set your heart on fire.

GERRY: No!

JENNINE: Sure you did.

GERRY: It was a fireball from the sky.

JENNINE: She must have been quite a chickie to make you heat up so much.

GERRY: Why would I lust after some checkout girl at the Mega Shelf? I don't have lust anymore. I have you. Lust doesn't exist.

JENNINE: A check out girl huh?

GERRY: Stop putting words in my mouth!

JENNINE: She must have been something. Brunette? Red head?

GERRY: This is ridiculous.

JENNINE: Red head. Long legs?

GERRY: No Legs! She had no legs! And no head either!

JENNINE: So there is a girl.

GERRY: No! Look. Jennine. Are you going to believe I “looked” at some strange “woman” and some way, some how, “lust” burned a hole in my sweater, or are you going to believe my perfectly reasonable fireball story?

JENNINE: Don’t get upset.

GERRY: I’m not upset.

JENNINE: There’s no reason to get upset.

GERRY: I’m not upset! I’m a calm person! Everyone says so! I’m very, very calm! I’m always calm and rational and tranquil!

JENNINE: Sit down Gerry. You’re getting all flushed.

GERRY: Who’s the person who handles crises at work?

JENNINE: You do.

GERRY: When there was a nation wide recall of the Integrity Versatile All-Season Radial tire who handled the fall out?

JENNINE: You did.

GERRY: Was I calm or upset?

JENNINE: Calm.

GERRY: Exactly.

JENNINE: So let’s discuss this red headed, long legged, checkout girl in a calm, rational, tranquil manner.

GERRY: It was a fireball.

JENNINE: Red head.

GERRY: Fireball.

JENNINE: Redhead.

GERRY: Fireball, fireball, fireball!

JENNINE: Red head, red head, fireball!

GERRY: Red head! Ah!

JENNINE: Ah ha!

GERRY: That doesn't count you tricked me!

JENNINE: I'll bet she isn't even a real red head!

GERRY: You'd be wrong, dead wrong!

JENNINE: And I'll bet she doesn't have long legs either!

GERRY: Wrong again! Her legs were really long. Up to her armpits! Twice as long as...

JENNINE: Twice as long as.....?

GERRY: Aw crap.

JENNINE: Sit down Gerry.

GERRY: Crap. Crap. Crap. I should have kept it simple. A cigarette burn out of control. I went too big didn't I?

JENNINE: Yes.

GERRY: Too many details. Too many flourishes. Too many accoutrements.

JENNINE: They were nice accoutrements.

GERRY: And I practised all the way home too. I didn't even think about burn marks on my hands. *(he bangs his hand to his forehead)* Stupid, stupid, stupid!

JENNINE: So. Now that we're out in the open....

GERRY: Crap.

JENNINE: What have we learned from this little incident?

GERRY: Don't go to the Mega Shelf on Saturday afternoon.

JENNINE: No...

GERRY: *(with a big sigh)* Don't lie to Jennine.

JENNINE: Do you love me?

GERRY: I do! You gotta believe me. I just.... And she just....she was just....

JENNINE: A red head.

GERRY: You're not going to tell your mother are you? About the sweater? Or my mother?
You're not going to tell my mother about this are you?

JENNINE: Of course not. It'll be our little secret. But maybe I should pick out the display shelves for her snow globes.

GERRY: (*hugging JENNINE*) I do love you. This will never happen again!

JENNINE: Never say never. Say, why don't we go out to dinner tonight? Your treat.

GERRY: You got it. Whatever you want. The sky's the limit! (*he pauses for a moment*) This didn't turn out the way I expected at all. I thought you'd freak out. Go through the roof.

JENNINE: Now you know.

GERRY: Now I know. I'm going to go make reservations. El Greco?

JENNINE: Perfecto.

GERRY gives her a kiss and exits. JENNINE sits for a second. She gets off the couch and looks off; making sure that GERRY is out of earshot. She then returns to the couch and pulls up one of the seat cushions. She pulls out a sweater that has a huge burn hole right in the centre of the chest. Exactly like GERRY's.

JENNINE: Guess I don't need that cigarette out of control story after all.

Blackout.