

Miss Firecracker character descriptions

General note: All characters conform to historically typical gender norms, racial norms, and societal views of physical beauty or lack thereof. This is central to the theme of the play, the period, and the concept of this production. The play takes place in the south, but no dialects will be utilized.

Characters:

Carnelle: 24, the beauty contestant. White, female presenting, and a beauty. Ideally, the actor would be willing to already have or dye her hair bright red, but this is not a requirement. Carnelle starts out with the namesake energy of the pageant. She has a poor reputation due to her promiscuous past. Carnelle is on a mission to change the town's perception of her and leave in a blaze of glory but it doesn't play out as she expects. Carnelle learns, grows, and matures with her views of herself and how society sees her throughout the play. The character will smoke simulated marijuana during the production.

Popeye Jackson, 23, the seamstress. Non-white actor preferred. Female presenting. Popeye is plain looking; not particularly attractive or unattractive. Popeye is somewhat quiet and reserved but has a certain sparkle in her eyes; she knows what she wants in life. Popeye is immediately smitten with Delmount and pursues him throughout the show. Shares a single kiss with him.

Elain Ruttledge, 32, Carnelle's first cousin and Delmount's sister. White, female presenting, and a beauty. She was a previous winner of the Miss Firecracker contest and is now a well-off trophy wife, with kids; the picture of traditional happiness in society. Elain has an energy, but it is more mature and slightly contrasts with Carnelle's. Elain is initially unhappy with her chosen path and wants a fresh start but finally accepts and resigns herself to her lot in life.

Delmount Williams, 28, Carnelle's first cousin and Elain's brother. White, male presenting. Average looking. Not particularly striking on either side of the attractiveness scale. Initially not interested in Popeye, but eventually learns that she is what he wants and/or needs. Delmount has a mental illness that gives him a manic energy and focus without knowing how to harness it. He shares a single kiss with Popeye. The character will smoke simulated marijuana during the production.

Mac Sam, 36, a balloon man. Non-white actor preferred. Male presenting but may be lightly ambiguous with gender and/or sexual norms. He is thin and does not appear in good health, for good reason. Mac is content with his life, including his poor health and the choices that lead him there. The character will smoke simulated cigarettes during the production.

Tessy Mahoney, 23, the beauty contest coordinator. White, female presenting. Not attractive. Tessy is strong-willed and sarcastic but in a sweet and humorous way. It is a compensatory strategy for not being a “beauty.”