

Griddle Cakes

Mark Rigney





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GRIDDLE CAKES

by Mark Rigney

CAST

MARTHA MAE THOMPSON: Sixty or older, female. Jessie's aging sister.

JESSIE MAE THOMPSON: Sixty or older, female. Martha's aging sister.

Place

A crumbling, supremely rural front porch.

Time

A springtime morning, late March of this year or next, at about 11:20 AM.

Setting: The peeling front porch of an aging, tucked-in-a-hollow farmhouse.

At Rise: Two aging sisters, JESSIE and MARTHA, settle into two aging rockers. They fan constantly with stiff antique fans (or perhaps with yesterday's local newspaper). They rock. They fan. Amazingly, they manage to fan and rock in tandem. At first.

JESSIE: Hot today.

MARTHA: Yep.

JESSIE: Hot like a griddle in August.

MARTHA: 'Spect it is.

JESSIE: Which strikes me as just plain wrong, seein' as how it's not even April.

MARTHA: You realize Berniece Wilsbacher'll be doin' her wildflower walk directly.

JESSIE: Martha Mae. Did you hear a word I been sayin'?

MARTHA: Reckon I did.

JESSIE: You didn't neither and you know it. You weren't listening any more than a tickseed in winter.

MARTHA: Now Jessie Mae, you know perfectly well that tickweed is incapable of listening, no matter the season. It don't got ears.

JESSIE: The point is not the tickseed!

MARTHA: *Tickweed*.

JESSIE: Tickweed, tickseed, it don't matter, they're the same thing!

MARTHA: You say potato, I say *potah*to. And it don't matter either way, most folks nowadays call 'em Coreopsis. Bunch of show-offs, you ask me.

JESSIE: You've got me all muddled. Where was I?

MARTHA: You were about to yell at me for missing the point.

JESSIE: I do not yell.

MARTHA: You were about to upbraid me most politely for missing the point.

JESSIE: Ah. My point was that tickseed—

MARTHA: *Tickweed*—

JESSIE: Whatever! The point is that you weren't listening! Again!

MARTHA: I do apologize, Jessie, but all your talk of heat and August and carbon footprints just got me to thinking.

JESSIE: Lord, here we go.

MARTHA: The thing of it is, see, it can be mighty hard to hear past a thought. Which is maybe why I weren't listening quite so well as I might.

JESSIE: 'Spect that might be reasonable.

MARTHA: I remember one time where I was reading that the conscious mind can only do just so many things at once.

JESSIE: I reckon that allowin' you within ten feet of a book oughter be against the law.

MARTHA: That is unkind.

JESSIE: Oughter be a kind of restricted zone 'round both the bookshop and the library.
"No Martha Mae Thompsons Allowed."

MARTHA: Will you let me make my point?

JESSIE: I thought I was the one had a point.

MARTHA: You had a point?

JESSIE: Don't you try and make off with my point.

MARTHA: I don't want your point!

JESSIE: Why not? It was a good one!

MARTHA: You really had a point?

JESSIE: I did, I most certainly did.

MARTHA: And what was it again?

JESSIE: I forget.

MARTHA: Then would it be too, too objectionable if I told you mine?

JESSIE: I 'spect not. But will you at least concede that it's hot? For March?

MARTHA: I will. I do. But my point is this: Berniece Wilsbacher will use this unholy weather as an excuse to telephone every household for ten miles 'round to invite us on her annual wildflower walk.

JESSIE: I don't want to go.

MARTHA: I figured on that.

JESSIE: Don't tell me you do.

MARTHA: It'd be a change.

JESSIE: Oh, would it really?

MARTHA: Might be a nice change.

JESSIE: Martha Mae. I 'spect you've lost your marbles.

MARTHA: 'Spect I've done no such thing.

JESSIE: I fear for you. I truly do.

MARTHA: I like a nice wildflower now and again.

JESSIE: Oh, do you now.

MARTHA: And we can't just sit on this porch forever.

JESSIE: 'Spect we can.

MARTHA: 'Spect *you* could.

JESSIE: If Berniece Wilsbacher calls, and I'm home? You tell her I'm out. Better yet, you tell her I've died.

MARTHA: She won't believe that.

JESSIE: What, you don't think I'm old enough to die?

MARTHA: Berniece Wilsbacher reads the obituaries like they was goin' out of style.

JESSIE: Prob'ly to make sure she isn't in them.

MARTHA: My point is, she'd know if you'd died.

JESSIE: Tell her I was snakebit. Happened sudden-like. There was copperheads and rattlers and cottonmouths, they all ganged up on me. I didn't have a chance.

MARTHA: And next week, when you see her in church?

JESSIE: I shall have a miraculous recovery.

MARTHA: Jessie Mae Thompson, Berniece would know if you were dead.

JESSIE: Now Martha Mae, you get this through your thick skull and you get it through right. I am not going, not for any money, on Berniece Wilsbacher's annual wildflower walk!

MARTHA: But we go every year.

JESSIE: Well, this year I'm staying put.

MARTHA: End of an era, then.

JESSIE: Berniece Wilsbacher is deaf as a post!

MARTHA: I don't recall the ear being an essential part of appreciating spring flowers.

JESSIE: It ain't Berniece Wilsbacher that I'm worried about.

MARTHA: Ah.

JESSIE: I think it's time we returned to our usual morning topics.

MARTHA: 'Spect that'd be safer.

JESSIE: 'Spect it most definitely would. *(a telephone rings, off)*

MARTHA: Telephone's ringing.

JESSIE: Don't you dare answer it.

MARTHA: That's one mighty persistent caller.

JESSIE: Hang up, Berniece! Hang up and clear off!

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!