Flyin West By Pearl Cleage Delta Center Stage  | d60b6a93463e604dbb12247c2992b58a

A Free Negro Woman

What looks like crazy on an ordinary day teaching theatre and improvisation, using feminist pedagogies, to engage theatre students in deep and transformative encounters.

I wish I had a red dress when Regina Burns married Blue Hamilton, she knew he was no ordinary man. A charismatic R&B singer who gave up his career to assume responsibility for the safety of Atlanta’s West End community, Blue had created an African American urban oasis where crime and violence were virtually nonexistent. In the beginning, Regina enjoyed a circle of engaging friends and her own work as a freelance communications consultant. Most of all, she relished the company of her husband, who never ceased to be a source of passion and delight. Then everything changed. More and more frightened women were showing up in West End, seeking Blue’s protection from lovers who had suddenly become violent. When the worst offenders begin to disappear without a trace, the signs—all of them—seem to point toward Blue and his longtime associate, Joseph “General” Richardson. Now that Regina is pregnant, her fear for Blue’s safety has become an obsession that threatens the very heart of their relationship. At the same time, Regina’s friend Aretha Hargrove is desperately trying to redefine her own marriage. Aretha’s husband, Kame, is lobbying for them to leave West End and move to midtown. Aretha resists at first, but finally agrees in an effort to rekindle the flame that first brought them together. Regina and Aretha have no way of knowing that what they regard as their private struggles will soon become very public. When Baby Brother, a charming con man, insinuates himself into the community, it becomes clear that there is more to his handsome façade than meets the eye. He carries the seeds of change that will affect both women in profound and startling ways. Returning to the vividly rendered Atlantia district of her last two novels, New York Times bestselling author Pearl Cleage brilliantly weaves the threads of her characters’ intersecting lives into a story of family, friendship and, of course, love. Baby Brother’s Blues is full of wit and warmth, illumination the core of every woman’s hopes and dreams.

Steel Magnolias When Regina Burns assumed Blue Hamilton, she knew he was no ordinary man. A charismatic R&B singer who gave up his career to assume responsibility for the safety of Atlantia’s West End community, Blue had created an African American urban oasis where crime and violence were virtually nonexistent. In the beginning, Regina enjoyed a circle of engaging friends and her own work as a freelance communications consultant. Most of all, she relished the company of her husband, who never ceased to be a source of passion and delight. Then everything changed. More and more frightened women were showing up in West End, seeking Blue’s protection from lovers who had suddenly become violent. When the worst offenders begin to disappear without a trace, the signs—all of them—seem to point toward Blue and his longtime associate, Joseph “General” Richardson. Now that Regina is pregnant, her fear for Blue’s safety has become an obsession that threatens the very heart of their relationship. At the same time, Regina’s friend Aretha Hargrove is desperately trying to redefine her own marriage. Aretha’s husband, Kame, is lobbying for them to leave West End and move to midtown. Aretha resists at first, but finally agrees in an effort to rekindle the flame that first brought them together. Regina and Aretha have no way of knowing that what they regard as their private struggles will soon become very public. When Baby Brother, a charming con man, insinuates himself into the community, it becomes clear that there is more to his handsome façade than meets the eye. He carries the seeds of change that will affect both women in profound and startling ways. Returning to the vividly rendered Atlantia district of her last two novels, New York Times bestselling author Pearl Cleage brilliantly weaves the threads of her characters’ intersecting lives into a story of family, friendship and, of course, love. Baby Brother’s Blues is full of wit and warmth, illumination the core of every woman’s hopes and dreams.

Blues for an Alabama Sky The impressive array of scholars gathered in this collection, all experts in the field, read the plays with nuance and situate them deftly within their cultural and historical contexts. Scholars of contemporary theater and drama and of African American literature will find value in this engaging collection.- Choice For students and scholars of American theatre and drama generally and African American theatre and drama most particularly, this is an extremely valuable critical source.- Harry Elam, Stanford University, USA In the last fifty years, American and World theatre has been challenged and enriched by the rise to prominence of numerous female African American dramatists. Contemporary African American Women Playwrights is the first critical volume to explore the contexts and influences of these writers, and their exploration of black history and identity through a wealth of diverse, courageous and visionary dramas. Kolin compiles a wealth of new essays, comprising: Yale scholar David Kraner on the dramatic legacy of Lorraine Hansberry, Zora Neale Hurston, Marta Bonner and Georgia Douglas Johnson individual chapters devoted to: Alice Childress, Sonia Sanchez, Adrienne Kennedy, Ntozake Shange, Pearl Cleage, Alisha Rahman, Glenda Dickerson, Anna Deavere Smith and Suzan Lori-Park -an essay and accompanying interview with Lynn Notage comprehensive reviews of attending theatrical forms, from choreopoems and surrealistic plays, to documentary theatre and civil rights dramas, and their use in challenging racial and gender hierarchies. Contributors: Brandi Wilkins Catane, Soyica Diggs, James Fisher, Freda Scott Miles, Joan Wylie Hall, Philip C. Kolin, David Kraner, Sandra G. Shannon, Debbie Thompson, Beth Turner and Jacqueline Wood.

The Kentucky Cycle Familiar faces and places meet fresh twists and turns in this enthralling novel from acclaimed author Pearl Cleage. Atlantia’s West End district has always been a haven and home to a coterie of unique characters—artists and thinkers, dreamers and doers. Folks here know one another’s names, keep their doors unlocked, and their neighbors as well. They are the people who are looking for drugs, seeking sanctuary, or a little old lady should think twice before hitting this part of town. And Blue Hamilton, West End’s unofficial mayor and longtime protector, will see to it that you do. Blue wears many hats here, including adhered husband to Regina, dear nephew to A bey, and doing father to Sweetiee and another little one on the way. Blue is also the man you pay your respects to if you’re looking to set up shop in this urban enclave—just ask Serena Mayflower, whom Blue sees striding down Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard wearing skin-tight black leather pants, thigh-high boots, and bright red lipstick. This tall, slender, ethereally beautiful woman and her four equally striking sisters make up the Too Fine Five, a quintet of African American women who have suddenly become violent. When the worst offenders begin to disappear without a trace, the signs—all of them—seem to point toward Blue and his longtime associate, Joseph “General” Richardson. Now that Regina is pregnant, her fear for Blue’s safety has become an obsession that threatens the very heart of their relationship. At the same time, Regina’s friend Aretha Hargrove is desperately trying to redefine her own marriage. Aretha’s husband, Kame, is lobbying for them to leave West End and move to midtown. Aretha resists at first, but finally agrees in an effort to rekindle the flame that first brought them together. Regina and Aretha have no way of knowing that what they regard as their private struggles will soon become very public. When Baby Brother, a charming con man, insinuates himself into the community, it becomes clear that there is more to his handsome façade than meets the eye. He carries the seeds of change that will affect both women in profound and startling ways. Returning to the vividly rendered Atlantia district of her last two novels, New York Times bestselling author Pearl Cleage brilliantly weaves the threads of her characters’ intersecting lives into a story of family, friendship and, of course, love. Baby Brother’s Blues is full of wit and warmth, illumination the core of every woman’s hopes and dreams.
The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at a Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years Enjoying an unusually close relationship with her daughter, Phoebe, Catherine Sanderson has kept only one secret—the identity of Pheebe's father—until Pheebe embarks on her own search for her paternity, bringing her real father, B. J., an investigative reporter working on a story involving Catherine's newest client, back into their lives. 50,000 first printing.

Radical Acts THE STORY: The place is the small Mississippi town of Brookhaven, the time a few days before the Fourth of July. Camelle Scott (known locally as Miss Hot Tamale) is rehearsing furiously for the Miss Firecracker Contest—hoping that a victory will

Flying Solo THE STORY: In the winter of 1964, ten years after the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is planning a massive voter registration drive that promises to put the city back at the center of the Civil Rights Movement. Among those who can be forgiven Beth for breaking up her wedding plans on New Year's Eve because she just didn't think Regina was good enough to marry her son? Meanwhile, Regina's visionary Aunt Abbie has told her to be on the lookout for a handsome stranger with "the ocean in his eyes" who has a bone to pick and a promise to keep. Then a blue-eyed brother appears on the streets of Afro-Atlanta wearing a black cashmere overcoat, flashing a dazzling smile, and lending a helping hand when Regina needs it most. But between falling for Blue Hamilton and dealing with Beth, secrets will emerge that will threaten to send her life twisting in surprising new directions. Like a conversation with a good friend, Some Things I Never Thought I'd Do shares hope, love, and laughter. As always, it is Pearl Cleage's unforgettable characters and her gift for dialogue that will earn this provocative new novel a place in the hearts of her growing family of readers.

Baby Brother's Blues

Some Things I Never Thought I'd Do Includes biographical sketches, play synopses, production histories, and bibliographical information for more than 80 contemporary women playwrights who present African American, Latina, Asian American, and lesbian perspectives.

Flying West With the unique blend of truth and humor that made her first novel, What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day . . ., a huge bestseller, Pearl Cleage returns with an extraordinary novel that is rich in character, steeped in sisterhood, and bursting with unexpected love, . . ., and maybe just a little magic. Depicting the time of day, Regina Burns is a woman on the edge of a nervous breakdown or an overdue breakthrough. One shattered heart and six months of rehab have left her wary and shell-shocked—especially with the prospect of taking a temporary consulting job in Atlanta, a move that would allow Regina to rescue the family home that she borrowed against when she was “a stomp down dope fiend.” Her stone-faced banker has grudgingly agreed to give her sixty days to settle her debts or lose the house. Returning to Atlanta is a big risk. Last time Regina was there, she lost track of who she was and what she wanted. There's a lot of emotional baggage with her new employer, Beth Davis. Can she really forgive Beth for breaking up her wedding plans on New Year's Eve because she just didn't think Regina was good enough to marry her son? Meanwhile, Regina's visionary Aunt Abbie has told her to be on the lookout for a handsome stranger with "the ocean in his eyes" who has a bone to pick and a promise to keep. Then a blue-eyed brother appears on the streets of Afro-Atlanta wearing a black cashmere overcoat, flashing a dazzling smile, and lending a helping hand when Regina needs it most. But between falling for Blue Hamilton and dealing with Beth, secrets will emerge that will threaten to send her life twisting in surprising new directions. Like a conversation with a good friend, Some Things I Never Thought I'd Do shares hope, love, and laughter. As always, it is Pearl Cleage's unforgettable characters and her gift for dialogue that will earn this provocative new novel a place in the hearts of her growing family of readers.

I'll Hear from Me THE STORY: It is the summer of 1930 in Harlem, New York. The creative euphoria of the Harlem Renaissance has given way to the harsher realities of the Great Depression. Young Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., is feeding the hungry and preaching an

Till You Hear from Me THE STORY: When May and Charlie joined hundreds of other Americans who went to Mississippi in the summer of 1964 for a massive voter registration drive, they had no idea their lives were about to change forever. As students at Howard University, they became part of the civil rights movement, and their experiences would shape the way they saw the world. Their journey would lead them to Mississippi, where they would encounter the pain and struggle of the African American community and the determination of the local people fighting for their rights. Their story is a powerful testament to the power of love and hope in the face of adversity.
Contemporary African American Women Playwrights One actor portrays every character in a small Jersey Shore town as he unravels the story of Leonard Pekey, a tenaciously optimistic and flamboyant fourteen-year-old boy who goes missing. A luminous force of nature whose magic is only truly felt once he is gone, Leonard becomes an unexpected inspiration as the town’s citizens question how they live, who they love, and what they leave behind.

Just Want To Die For centuries, African American women have been remarking the world, giving testament to the power of hope, courage, and resilience. But it took the inspired generosity of Oprah Winfrey to honor fully the many gifts of sisterhood. For three amazing days—from May 13 to 15, 2005—a distinguished group of women was invited to celebrate the enduring achievements of twenty-five of their mentors and role models—and in the process pay tribute to the long, glorious tradition of African American accomplishment. The brilliant centerpiece of the weekend was the reading aloud of Pearl Cleage’s poem “We Speak Your Names,” written especially for the occasion and appearing here for the first time in this beautiful keepsake book. As deeply moving in print as it was during that weekend of love and praise, the poem names each of the women honored: Dr. Maya Angelou, Coretta Scott King, Diahann Carroll, Toni Morrison, Nikki Giovanni, Rosa Parks, Katherine Dunham, and other legends of the brightest magnitude. With heartfelt eloquence, Pearl Cleage (herself a luminary of the younger generation) celebrates her distinguished elders’ strengths, their magic, their loving kindness, their faith in themselves, and the priceless example of their lives. In her introduction, the poet shares: “My sisters, here, there, and everywhere, this poem is for you. Use it, adapt it, pass it on....” Destined to become a classic, We Speak Your Names is a treasure to keep forever and a precious, inspiring gift for the ones you love.

Till You Hear From Me After she is passed over for a job in the Obama administration, thirty-something Ida B. Wells Dunbar returns home to Atlanta to help her father, a minister and civil rights icon, who is wrestling with issues of his own.

Women Playwrights of Diversity The legendary Greek figure Orpheus was said to have possessed magical powers capable of moving all living and inanimate things through the sound of his lyre and voice. Over time, the Orphic theme has come to indicate the power of music to unsettle, subvert, and ultimately bring down oppressive structures in order to liberate the soul and expand human life without limits. The liberating effect of music has been a particularly important theme in twentieth-century African American literature. The nine original essays in Black Orpheus examine the Orphic theme in the fiction of such African American writers as James T.部委er, L. Anderson Hughes, Claudia M. Kay, James Baldwin, Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker, Gayl Jones, and Toni Morrison. The authors discussed in this volume depict music as a mystical, shamanistic, and spiritual power that can miraculously transform the realities of the soul and of the world. Here, the musician uses his or her music as a weapon to shield and protect his or her spirituality. Written by scholars of English, music, women's studies, African American studies, cultural theory, and black and African studies, the essays in this interdisciplinary collection ultimately explore the thematic, linguistic structural presence of music in twentieth-century African American fiction.

We Speak Your Names A Study Guide for Pearl Cleage’s Flyin’ West,” excerpted from Gale’s acclaimed Drama For Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Drama For Students for all of your research needs.

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The Miss Firecracker Contest America matters. Drama about “a world of fragmented experience so speeded up by human endurance that a man must either die laughing or go mad” —back cover.

Goodnight, Tyler The Pulitzer Prize-winning cycle of one-act plays spanning two centuries of American history: “hauntingly memorable [with a] poetic impulse” (Time). One of the most important contemporary works of political theater, The Kentucky Cycle was awarded the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for its astute and dramatically epic investigation of the brutal birth of America. Set in the Appalachian Mountains and spanning seven decades—from 1775 to 1795—this saga of rural Kentucky digs beneath our American mythology to confront the truth of our national history. It is the story of three families whose lives are irrevocably intertwined as they struggle for control over a portion of the Cumberland Plateau. From the darker realities of our pioneer heritage to the bloody lessons of the Civil War, and from the Unionization of coal miners to the harsh environmental legacy of strip mining, this fascinating work chronicles the lives of ordinary people struggling to find a better place for themselves in an unpredictable world. “Serious drama with a dark center...an epic” —The New Yorker “Riveting theater...[a] monumental work.” —Los Angeles Times

Some Things I Never Thought I’d Do A play about the imagined fault line between black and white lives by Claudia Rankine, the author of Citizen The White Card stages a conversation that is both informed and derailed by the black/white American drama. The scenes in this one-act play, for all the characters’ disagreements, stalemates, and seeming impasses, explore what happens if one is willing to stay in the room when it is painful to bear the pressure to listen and the obligation to respond. —from the introduction by Claudia Rankine Claudia Rankine’s first published play, The White Card, poses the essential question: Can American society progress if whiteness remains invisible? Composed of two scenes, the play opens with a dinner party thrown by Virginia and Charles, an influential Manhattan couple, for the up-and-coming artist Charlotte. Their conversation about art and representations of race spirals toward the devastation of Virginia and Charles’s intentions. One year later, the second scene brings Charlotte and Charles into the artist’s studio, and their confrontation raises both the stakes and the questions of what—and who—is actually on display. Rankine’s The White Card is a moving and revelatory distillation of racial divisions as experienced in the white spaces of the living room, the art gallery, the theater, and the imagination itself.

See It All and Done the Rest For Josephine Evans, home was on the stages where she worked, the world where she was thirty years establishing herself as one of the finest actresses of her generation. Josephine was the toast of Europe, and her fabulous apartment in A msterdam’s theater district was a popular gathering place for an international community of artists, and expatriates who considered themselves true citizens of the world. Josephine lived above and beyond the reach of conventional definitions of who and what an African American could be, and her regions of loyal friends loved her for it. She had a perfect life and enough sense to live it to the hilt, but then a war she didn’t fully understand turned everything upside down, thrusting her into a role she never wanted and was not prepared to play. Suddenly the target of angry protests aimed at herself, Josephine had never run out of targets. She continued the saga of Virginia and Charles with the help of a new Orphic character, Joshua, who is house sitting in Atlanta’s West End; and trying to avoid the unwanted attentions of Dig It!, the city’s brand-new gossip magazine, Josephine struggles to reclaim her old life even as she scrambles to shape her new one. Completing her friend Howard Denmond is as good as his word when he promises to engineer her triumphant return to the European stage, Josephine sets out to increase her nest egg by selling the house her mother willed her, only to find the long-neglected property has become home to squatters who have no intention of leaving. But a chance unexpected reunion with an old friend offers Josephine a chance to set things right. Spurning an offer from unscrupulous land developer Greer Woodruff, Josephine gathers new friends around her, including Victor Causey, a lawyer whose addictions left him homeless but still determined to protect his property; and trying to avoid the unwanted attentions of Dig It!, ...
falling for Blue Hamilton and dealing with Beth, secrets will emerge that will threaten to send her life twisting in surprising new directions. Like a conversation with a good friend, Some Things I Never Thought I'd Do shares hope, love, and laughter. As always, it is Pearl Cleage's unforgettable characters and her gift for dialogue that will earn this provocative new novel a place in the hearts of her growing family of readers.

Bourbon at the Border After a decade of elegant pleasures and luxe living with the Atlanta brothers and sisters with the best clothes and biggest dreams, Ava Johnson has temporarily returned home to Idlewild—her fabulous career and power plans smashed to bits by cold reality. But what she imagines to be the end is, instead, a beginning. Because, in the ten-plus years since Ava left, all the problems of the big city have come to roost in the sleepy North Michigan community whose ordinariness once drove her away; and she cannot turn her back on friends and family who sorely need her in the face of impending trouble and tragedy. Besides which, that one unthinkably, unmistakable thing is now happening to her: Ava Johnson is falling in love. Acclaimed playwright, essayist, New York Times bestselling author, and columnist Pearl Cleage has created a world rich in character, human drama, and deep, compassionate understanding, in a remarkable novel that sizzles with sensuality, hums with gritty truth, and sings and crackles with life-affirming energy.

Stamford Theatre Works, January 30-February 17, 2002, Presents Flyin' West by Pearl Cleage BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Pearl Cleage's Just Wanna Testify and a Till You Hear from Me discussion guide. From the acclaimed Pearl Cleage, author of What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day ... and Seen It All and Done the Rest, comes an Obama-era romance cast of unforgettable characters. Just when it appears that all her hard work on Barack Obama’s presidential campaign is about to pay off with a White House job, thirty-five-year-old Ida B. Wells Dunbar finds herself on Washington, D.C.’s post-election sidelines even as her twentiesomething counterparts overtake the West Wing. Adding to her woes, her father, the Reverend Horace A. Dunbar, Atlanta civil rights icon and self-described “foot soldier for freedom,” is notoriously featured on an endlessly replayed YouTube clip in which his pronouncements don’t exactly jibe with the new era in American politics. The Rev’s stinging words and myopic views don’t sound anything like the man who raised Ida to make her mark in the world. When friends call to express their concern, Ida realizes it’s time to head home and see for herself what’s going on. Besides, with her job prospects growing dimmer, getting out of D.C. for a while might be the smartest move she could make. Back in her old West End neighborhood, Ida runs into childhood friend and smooth political operator Wes Harper, also in town to pay a visit to the Reverend Dunbar, his mentor. Ida doesn’t trust Wes or his mysterious connections for one second, but she can’t deny her growing attraction to him. While Ida and the Rev try to find the balance between personal loyalties and political realities, they must do some serious soul searching in order to get things back on track before Wes permanently derails their best laid plans.

The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey Author's experience performing the role of Minnie Dove Charles in the production of Pearl Cleage's, Flyin' West, a drama set in 1898 of a group of African American female pioneers who settled in an all-black community in Kansas; the production was staged by the Illinois Theatre Center, Park Forest, Illinois, Feb. 16-March 4, 2001.

Things I Should Have Told My Daughter Since Joyce Mitchell was widowed five years ago, she's kept herself occupied by running the Sewing Circus, an all-girl group she founded to provide badly needed services to young women at risk, many of whom are single mothers. But some nights, home alone, she has to admit that something is missing. And soon she may not even have the Sewing Circus to fill up her life, as the state legislature has decided not to fund the group. Feeling defeated and pessimistic, Joyce reluctantly agrees to dinner at the home of her best friend, Sister, and finds not only a perfect meal but a tall, dark stranger named Nate Anderson. His unexpected presence touches a chord in Joyce that she thought her heart had forgotten how to play. Suddenly, Joyce feels ready to grab a sexy red dress and the life that goes with it ... if she can keep her girls safe from the forces—useless boyfriends and government agencies—alike against them.

A Study Guide for Pearl Cleage's "Flyin' West" The first collection by one of the leading African American women playwrights.