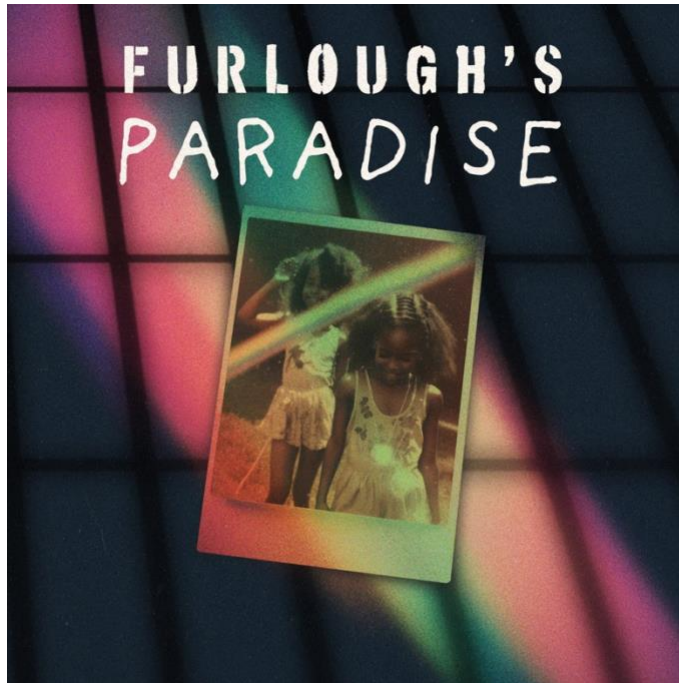


Alliance Theatre

institute

Study Guide
FURLOUGH'S PARADISE

Created as part of the Dramaturgy by Students program
by: Theresa Davis, Teaching Artist
with: Ms. Elizabeth Waugh, Theater Teacher
with: Students from Martin Luther King Jr. High School, DeKalb County Schools
and: Liz Davis, Head of Secondary Curriculum & Partnerships, Alliance Theatre



World Premiere
Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition Winner

By: a.k. payne
Directed by: Tinashe Kajese-Bolden

January 31 – March 3, 2024
Hertz Stage

Best enjoyed by audiences 15+
Recommended Grades: 10-12

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Actors Asha Basha Duniani and Cymiah Alexander on the first day of rehearsal for the Alliance Theatre, Hertz Stage production of Furlough’s Paradise. Photo by Aniska Tonge.

Georgia Standards of Excellence

English Language Arts

- ELAGSE9-10RL3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- ELAGSE9-10RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- ELAGSE11-12RL1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- ELAGSE11-12RL3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- ELAGSE11-12RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
- ELAGSE11-12RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Theater

- TAHTSA.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
 - a. Examine and apply theatrical theories, performances, and conventions from a variety of theatrical literature, historical periods, and cultures.
- TAHSAD.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experience, careers, and other content.
 - a. Explore the relationship between theatre and other non-arts disciplines to synthesize concepts and skills from other disciplines to create theatre.
- TAHSFT.RE.1 Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
 - b. State and support aesthetic judgments through experience in diverse styles and genres of theatre.
- TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.
 - a. Examine how theatre reflects real life.
 - b. Analyze how theatre employs aspects of other art forms and disciplines to effectively communicate with a live audience.
- TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
 - a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.
 - d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.
- TAHSTL.CN.1 Connect theatre literature to its dramaturgical contexts and other disciplines.
 - b. Identify and summarize contributions made to the development of theatre literature by different cultures and traditions.
 - c. Research and explain how cultural and historical factors have influenced playwrights and theatre literature.
 - d. Identify the elements, influences, and contributions of other art forms and content areas to theatre literature.

Georgia Standards of Excellence (continued)

Social Studies (Sociology)

- SSSocC1 Explain the development and importance of culture.
 - c. Explain the importance of culture as an organizing tool in society.
 - d. Describe the components of culture to include language, symbols, norms, and values; also include material and non-material culture.
- SSSocC3 Analyze social structure and interaction within society.
 - a. Explain the components of social structure, include: status, role and social institutions.
 - b. Describe and compare various types of societies.
 - c. Categorize groups within a society by comparing primary and secondary groups, in and out groups, reference groups, and social networks.
- SSSocSC1 Explain the process of socialization.
 - c. Identify and compare the stages of socialization, include: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and death/dying.
 - d. Evaluate the agents of socialization including family, peers, education, media, and religion. e. Analyze gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status as contributing factors to individual socialization.
- SSSocSC2 Analyze deviance in society.
 - c. Analyze the causes of deviant behavior.
 - d. Explain the impact of deviance on society.
- SSSocSC4 Analyze the function of social institutions as agents of social control across differing societies and times.
 - a. Analyze the function of social institutions in society, include: family, education, religion, economy, government/politics, health care, and media.
 - d. Analyze the functions and inequalities of the criminal justice system in relationship to a society's construct of crime and punishment.
 - f. Analyze the re-socialization process.
- SSSocIC1 Analyze forms of social inequality.
 - a. Explain how unequal distribution of power and resources affects the life chances of individuals in that society.
 - b. Analyze the sources and effects of stratification on the basis of social class, race and ethnicity, gender, age, and emotional, mental, and physical disabilities.

Synopsis

Winner of the 20th annual Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, Furlough's Paradise is a poignant new play examining the dynamics that shape our lives and lead us to where we make our homes. Cousins Sade and Mina, raised like sisters but now leading very different lives, return to their childhood town for the funeral of their mother and aunt. While Sade is on a three-day furlough from prison and Mina experiences a brief reprieve from her career and life on the West Coast, the two try to make sense of grief, home, love, and kinship. But traumas and resentments from the past, both real and surreal, threaten to pull them apart, all as time ticks towards the correctional officer's arrival.

Learn more: <https://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2023-24/furloughs-paradise>

About the Playwright



Source: Production Program

a.k. payne (Playwright) [she/they] is a playwright and theatermaker with roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her plays love on and engage Black lives and languages of the past, present, and future to find/remember stories that might create conditions for our collective liberation(s). They hold a B.A. in English and African-American Studies from Yale College and an MFA in Playwriting under Tarell Alvin McCraney from The David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University (formerly known as Yale School of Drama). Their work has been a finalist for the L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. They are a grandchild of the Great Migration; a queer & non-binary abolitionist affected in community by the “New Jim Crow;” and of a great lineage of Black women storytellers and livingroom archivists; all of which deeply informs, uplifts, and amplifies their work as a playwright, community organizer, and spacemaker.

About the Director



Photo by Greg Mooney

TINASHE KAJESE-BOLDEN (Director/ Jennings Hertz Artistic Director) stepped into the role of Artistic Director in 2023 after serving as the Alliance’s BOLD Associate Artistic Director. Tinashe is a 2019 Princess Grace Award Winner for Directing and Map Fund Award recipient to develop her devised new work *All Smiles*, centering the experience of children on the Autism Spectrum. Most recently, she directed the World Premiere of *The Many Wondrous Realities of Jasmine Starr-Kidd*. Select directing productions include *Toni Stone* (co-production Milwaukee Repertory Theater and the Alliance Theatre), *School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play* (Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre), *Ghost* (Alliance Theatre), *Native Gardens* (Virginia Stage Company), *Pipeline* (Horizon Theater), *Nick’s Flamingo Grill* (World Premiere at the Alliance Theatre), *Eclipsed* (Synchronicity Theatre, Best Director Suzi Bass Award). As a director and actor, she has worked on and off Broadway, including *The Imperial Theatre*, *Primary Stages*, *59E59 Theatre*, *Classical Theatre of Harlem*; and regionally at *Yale Rep*, *Woolly Mammoth Theater Co*, *Cincinnati Playhouse*, *The Geva Theatre*, *CTG’s Kirk Douglas Theatre*, among others, as well as recurring roles on TV/Film (*Strays*, *Suicide Squad 2*, *Marvel’s Hawkeye*, *CW’s Valor*, *Dynasty*, *HBO’s Henrietta Lacks*, *Ava Duverney’s Cherish the Day*, among others.) She proudly serves on the ArtsATL Artist Advisory Council. “My mission is the pursuit of what connects our different communities and how we create art that serves that.”

Vocabulary
(alphabetical order)

Word (Part of Speech)	Definition
Bohemian (noun)	A person, as an artist or writer, who lives and acts free of regard for conventional rules and practices
Bougie (adjective, slang)	Relating to or characteristic of a person who indulges in some of the luxuries and comforts of a fancy lifestyle
Contraband (noun)	Goods imported or exported illegally
Dissonance (noun)	Inharmonious or harsh sound; discord; cacophony
Embalm (verb)	1. To treat a (deceased) body so as to preserve it 2. To preserve from oblivion, to keep in memory
Felony (noun)	An offense of graver character than those called misdemeanors, especially those commonly punished in the U.S. by imprisonment for more than a year
Furlough (noun)	A leave of absence granted to an inmate for medical or family matters
Gender (noun)	1. Either the male or female division of a species, especially as differentiated by social and cultural roles and behavior 2. A similar category of human beings that is outside the male/female binary
Jazz (noun)	Music originating in New Orleans around the beginning of the 20th century and subsequently developing through various increasingly complex styles, generally marked by intricate, propulsive rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, improvisatory, virtuosic solos, melodic freedom, and a harmonic idiom ranging from simple diatonicism through chromaticism to atonality
Liberal (adjective)	Favorable to progress or reform, as in political or religious affairs
Monopoly (noun)	Exclusive control of a commodity or service in a particular market
Obituary (noun)	A notice of the death of a person, often with a biographical sketch, as in a newspaper
Paradise (noun)	Heaven, the final abode of the righteous
Unencumbered (adjective)	Not impeded or slowed down; free to move, advance, or go forward; having few or no burdens or obligations
Urn (noun)	A vase for holding the ashes of a (deceased) body that has been cremated

Source: <https://www.dictionary.com/>

Idioms

What is an “idiom”?

An idiom is a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. For example, “it’s raining cats and dogs” or “see the light.”



Photo Source: geeksforgeeks.org/idioms

Idioms that appear in *Furlough’s Paradise*:

Expression or Phrase	Description
“An eye for an eye”	<p>The principle of justice that requires punishment equal in kind to the offense (not greater than the offense, as was frequently given in ancient times).</p> <p>Thus, if someone puts out another's eye, one of the offender's eyes should be put out. The principle is stated in the Book of Exodus as “Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”</p>
“A penny tips the scale” or “tips the scale”	<p>To upset the balance of a situation, such that one side or element is favored or gains advantage.</p> <p>Example 1: <i>The two candidates are so close in the polls that both are vying for something that will tip the scale in their favor.</i></p> <p>Example 2: <i>The immense interconnectivity of social media has tipped the scales of power somewhat back into the hands of the ordinary population.</i></p>
“Put money on your books”	<p>Inmates can purchase envelopes, stamps, shampoo, candy and many other items through the commissary system.</p> <p>As such, an inmate may ask someone to “put money on their book” so they can make commissary purchases.</p>

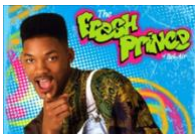
Allusions Fictional Characters & Stories



The Cheetah Girls is a musical comedy trilogy series produced by Debra Martin Chase, co-produced by Cheryl Hill and executive produced by Whitney Houston. Based on the young adult book series of the same name by Deborah Gregory, actresses including Raven-Symoné, Adrienne Bailon, Sabrina Bryan, Kiely Williams, and Lynn Whitfield are featured in the films.



Clueless is a 1995 American coming-of-age teen comedy film written and directed by Amy Heckerling. It stars Alicia Silverstone with supporting roles by Stacey Dash, Brittany Murphy and Paul Rudd (in his film debut). It was produced by Scott Rudin and Robert Lawrence. It is loosely based on Jane Austen's 1815 novel Emma, with a modern-day setting of Beverly Hills. The plot centers on a beautiful, popular, and rich high school student who befriends a new student and decides to give her a makeover while playing a matchmaker for her teachers and examining her own existence.



The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air is an American television sitcom created by Andy and Susan Borowitz for NBC. It aired from September 10, 1990, to May 20, 1996. The series stars Will Smith as a fictionalized version of himself, a street-smart teenager born and raised in West Philadelphia who is sent to live with his wealthy uncle and aunt in Bel-Air, where his lifestyle often clashes with that of his upper-class relatives.



Martin is an American television sitcom that aired for five seasons on Fox from August 27, 1992, to May 1, 1997. The show starred comedian and namesake Martin Lawrence as the titular character. Lawrence also played several other characters. Martin was one of Fox's highest-rated shows during the sitcom's run. Martin has frequently been regarded as one of the most influential and "pivotal", sitcoms of all time.



The Proud Family is an American animated television series created by Bruce W. Smith that originally ran on Disney Channel from September 15, 2001, to August 19, 2005.

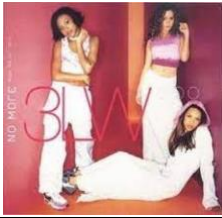


That's So Raven is an American television teen sitcom that was created by Michael Poryes and Susan Sherman, and aired on Disney Channel for four seasons between January 2003 and November 2007. The series centers on Raven Baxter (Raven-Symoné), a teenager with hidden psychic abilities. Episodes show Raven experiencing visions of future events; she must also deal with the social and personal issues of her youth.



The Little Mermaid is a 2023 American musical romantic fantasy film directed by Rob Marshall from a screenplay written by David Magee. Co-produced by Walt Disney Pictures, DeLuca Marshall, and Marc Platt Productions, it is a live-action adaptation of Disney's 1989 animated film of the same name, which itself is loosely based on the 1837 fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen.

Allusions Celebrities & Historical Figures



3LW3LW (initialism of "3 Lil Women") was an American girl group formed in 1999 by Adrienne Bailon, Kiely Williams, and Naturi Naughton. Jessica Benson later replaced Naughton after she left the group in 2002. 3LW was signed to the label Epic Records, and later moved to So So Def. They are best known for their singles "No More (Baby I'ma Do Right)", "Playas Gon' Play" and "I Do (Wanna Get Close to You)".



Arctic Monkeys are an English rock band formed in Sheffield in 2002. The group consists of lead singer Alex Turner, drummer Matt Helders, guitarist Jamie Cook and bassist Nick O'Malley. Former bassist Andy Nicholson left the band in 2006 shortly after their debut album was released.



Aretha Louise Franklin (March 25, 1942 – August 16, 2018) was an American singer, songwriter and pianist. Referred to as the "Queen of Soul", Rolling Stone twice named her as the greatest singer of all time. With global sales of over 75 million records, Franklin is one of the world's best-selling music artists.



On May 2 1973, Black Panther activist **Assata Olugbala Shakur** (fsn) Joanne Deborah Chesimard, was pulled over by the New Jersey State Police, shot twice and then charged with murder of a police officer. Assata spent six and a half years in prison under brutal circumstances before escaping out of the maximum security wing of the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey in 1979 and moving to Cuba, an island country located where the northern Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic Ocean meet.



Dolly Rebecca Parton (born January 19, 1946) is an American singer-songwriter and actress. She is known for her decades-long career in country music. After achieving success as a songwriter for others, Parton made her album debut in 1967 with Hello, I'm Dolly, which led to success during the remainder of the 1960s (both as a solo artist and with a series of duet albums with Porter Wagoner), before her sales and chart peak came during the 1970s and continued into the 1980s. Some of Parton's albums in the 1990s did not sell as well, but she achieved commercial success again in the new millennium and has released albums on various independent labels since 2000, including her own label, Dolly Records.



James Marshall "Jimi" Hendrix (born Johnny Allen Hendrix; November 27, 1942 – September 18, 1970) was an American guitarist, songwriter and singer. Although his mainstream career spanned only four years, he is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential electric guitarists in the history of popular music, and one of the most celebrated musicians of the 20th century. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame describes him as "arguably the greatest instrumentalist in the history of rock music."



Louis Armstrong was born August 4, 1901 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and died July 6, 1971 in New York, New York. A leading trumpeter, he was and one of the most influential artists in jazz history.



Maya Angelou (born Marguerite Annie Johnson; April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014) was an American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received dozens of awards and more than 50 honorary degrees. Angelou's series of seven autobiographies focus on her childhood and early adult experiences. The first, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), tells of her life up to the age of 17 and brought her international recognition and acclaim.



Thelonious Sphere Monk (October 10, 1917– February 17, 1982) was an American jazz pianist and composer. He had a unique improvisational style and made numerous contributions to the standard jazz repertoire, including "Round Midnight", "Blue Monk", "Straight, No Chaser", "Ruby, My Dear", "In Walked Bud", and "Well, You Needn't". Monk is the second-most-recorded jazz composer after Duke Ellington.



Ntozake Shange (1948 – 2018) was an American playwright and poet. As a Black feminist, she addressed issues relating to race and Black power in much of her work. She is best known for her Obie Award-winning play, *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* (1975). She also penned novels including *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo* (1982), *Liliane* (1994), and *Betsey Brown* (1985), about an African-American girl run away from home.



Public Enemy is an American hip hop group formed by Chuck D and Flavor Flav on Long Island, New York, in 1985. The group rose to prominence for their political messages including subjects such as American racism and the American media. Their debut album, *Yo! Bum Rush the Show*, was released in 1987 to critical acclaim, and their second album, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988), was the first hip hop album to top *The Village Voice's* Pazz & Jop critics' poll. Their next three albums, *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990), *Apocalypse 91... The Enemy Strikes Black* (1991) and *Muse Sick-n-Hour Mess Age* (1994), were also well received. The group has since released twelve more studio albums, including the soundtrack to the 1998 sports-drama film *He Got Game* and a collaborative album with Paris, *Rebirth of a Nation* (2006).

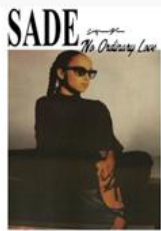
"Fight the Power" is a song by American hip hop group Public Enemy, released as a single in the summer of 1989 on Motown Records. It was conceived at the request of film director Spike Lee, who sought a musical theme for his 1989 film *Do the Right Thing*, with. First issued on the film's 1989 soundtrack, a

different version was featured on Public Enemy's 1990 studio album Fear of a Black Planet.



The Rolling Stones are an English rock band formed in London in 1962. Active across seven decades, they are one of the most popular and enduring bands of the rock era. In the early 1960s, the band pioneered the gritty, rhythmically driven sound that came to define hard rock. Their first stable line-up consisted of vocalist Mick Jagger, guitarist Keith Richards, multi-instrumentalist Brian Jones, bassist Bill Wyman, and drummer Charlie Watts.

During their early years, Jones was the primary leader of the band. After Andrew Loog Oldham became the group's manager in 1963, he encouraged them to write their own songs.



Helen Folasade Adu CBE (Yoruba: Fọláşadé Adú; born 16 January 1959), known professionally as Sade Adu or simply **Sade**, is a Nigerian-born British singer, known as the lead vocalist of her band Sade. One of the most successful British female artists in history, she is often recognised as an influence on contemporary music.



Stacey Lauretta Dash (born January 20, 1967) is an American actress. Dash played Dionne Marie Davenport in the 1995 feature film *Clueless* and its television series of the same name. She has also appeared in the films *Moving*, *Mo' Money*, *Renaissance Man*, and *View from the Top*. Other television work by Dash includes appearances in the series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Single Ladies* and the reality TV show *Celebrity Circus*. She has also appeared in music videos for Carl Thomas' "Emotional" and Kanye West's "All Falls Down".



Henry David Thoreau (July 12, 1817 – May 6, 1862) was an American naturalist, essayist, poet, and philosopher. A leading transcendentalist, he is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay "Civil Disobedience" (originally published as "Resistance to Civil Government"), an argument in favor of peaceful disobedience against an unjust state.

Allusions Historical Events & Movements



2017: Trump's inauguration: After a divisive election season, Donald Trump officially became the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017. In a 16-minute inaugural address (the shortest since Jimmy Carter's in 1977), Trump repeated his "America First" campaign slogan in which he delivered a dark-toned nationalist, populist message.

Women's rights: In January, the Women's [March on Washington](#), which advocated for policies regarding women's rights and other issues, became one of the largest single-day demonstrations in U.S. history.

Confederate monuments fall: White supremacists marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August to protest the city's plan to remove a statue of Confederate Army commander Robert E. Lee. One woman was killed and many more injured while protesting the white nationalist rally.

Las Vegas shooting: On October 1, gunman Stephen Paddock opened fire on a crowd of concert goers at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival on the Las Vegas Strip from the 32nd floor of the nearby Mandalay Bay Hotel.



Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a decentralized political and social movement that seeks to highlight racism, discrimination, and racial inequality experienced by black people, and promote anti-racism. Its primary concerns are incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence against black people. It started following the killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Rekia Boyd, among many others.



Jack and Jill of America is a leadership organization formed during the Great Depression. African American mothers founded it in 1938 with the intention of bringing kids together in a social and cultural setting. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The organization aims to improve the quality of life of children, particularly African-American children. There are more than 230 Jack and Jill chapters in 35 states across the United States, with more than 10,000 mother members and 40,000 parents and children.



On February 1, 1991, **USAir Flight 1493** collided with a smaller aircraft when it came to land at LA International Airport. SkyWest Airlines flight 5569, a small 19-seater plane had been taxiing onto the runway for take-off when the Boeing 737-300 crushed it before careering off the runway and catching fire. 35 people in total died, including all 12 aboard the crushed flight 5569.



Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the United Nations issued warnings to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain to cease their invasion. When their requests were ignored, a coalition of 35 countries, led by the United States, was deployed to Kuwait to protect their oil reserves and push out the invading forces. **Operation Desert Storm** is the combat stage of this defensive operation.

Allusions

Technology & Products



The DVD (common abbreviation for Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc) is a digital optical disc data storage format. It was invented and developed in 1995 and first released on November 1, 1996, in Japan. The medium can store any kind of digital data and has been widely used for video programs (watched using DVD players) or formerly for storing software and other computer files as well.



Kanekalon® is a modacrylic fiber introduced to the world in 1957 by Kaneka. It is a representative synthetic fiber with Japanese technology. Kanekalon® is soft with a human-hair like texture, it also has a Hot Water Set technology which allows for various hairstyles. The fiber is also flame-retardant. With these characteristics and features, Kanekalon® is widely used for synthetic braiding hair and other synthetic hair attachments such as wigs.

Food



Cookie Crisp is a breakfast cereal that is manufactured to look like chocolate chip cookies. It is produced by General Mills in the United States and Cereal Partners in other countries. Introduced in 1977, it was originally produced by Ralston Purina until they sold the trademark to General Mills in 1997.



A peanut butter and jelly sandwich (PB&J) consists of peanut butter and fruit preserves—jelly—spread on bread. The sandwich is popular in the United States, especially among children; a 2002 survey showed the average American will eat 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before graduating from high school.

Education



The General Educational Development (GED) tests are a group of four academic subject tests in the United States and Canada certifying academic knowledge equivalent for a high school diploma. This certification is an alternative to the U.S. high school diploma, as is HiSET. Passing the GED test gives those who do not complete high school, or who do not meet requirements for high school diploma, the opportunity to earn a Certificate of High School Equivalency or similarly titled credential. GED Testing Service is a joint venture of the American Council on Education, which started the GED program in 1942.



The Ivy League is an American collegiate athletic conference, comprising eight private research universities in the Northeastern United States. The term Ivy League is typically used to refer to the eight schools as a group of elite colleges with connotations of academic excellence, selectivity in admissions, and social elitism. Its members are Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University.



Valedictorian is an academic title for the highest-performing student of a graduating class of an academic institution. The valedictorian is commonly determined by a numerical formula calculated over the entire course of one's high school education. Generally an academic institution's grade point average (GPA) system is used, but other methods of selection may be used or factored in such as volunteer work or extra-curricular activity.

Character Analysis

Playwright a.k. payne describes *Furlough's Paradise* as:

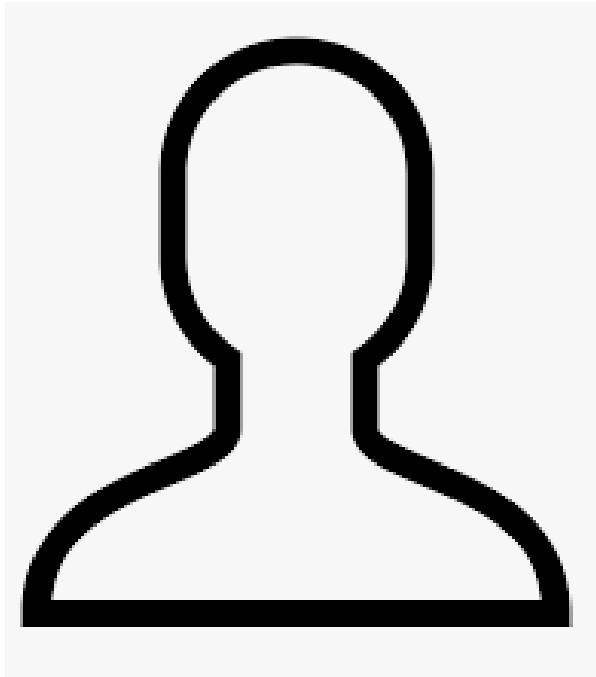
[an abolition play
or perhaps simply a play about cousins]

The piece features just two characters: the cousins --

SADE, whose name means 'honor earns a crown' or 'rain', mina call her 'de, an only child, a cousin, born 1991; and **MINA**, whose name means 'love,' an only child, a cousin, born 1991


Analyze one of those characters, below.

Character Name: _____

 <p>Source: https://www.visualpharm.com/free-icons/gender%20neutral%20user-595b40b85ba036ed117dd34c</p>	Motivation <i>Describe the character's multiple or conflicting motivations – what do they want?</i>
	Development <i>How does the character grow or change throughout the play?</i>
	Relationship <i>How does this character interact with the other?</i>
	Plot or Theme <i>How does this character advance the plot or develop a specific theme?</i>

Student-Led Research

The Five Stages of Grief

 <p>Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Photo Source: missfoundation.org</p>	<p>Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004) was a Swiss-American psychiatrist and pioneer of studies on dying people. In 1969, she published a work titled “On Death and Dying,” in which she proposed the patient-focused, death-adjustment pattern called the “Five Stages of Grief.”</p> <p>The 5 Stages are --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial: <i>an assertion that something said, believed, alleged, etc., is false</i> • Anger: <i>a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a wrong; wrath; ire</i> • Bargaining: <i>making a deal with oneself, or with a God (if religious)</i> • Depression: <i>The emotional feelings of sadness or gloom; to be lower in spirits; dejected; dispirited</i> • Acceptance: <i>Being ready to move forward</i> <p>Learn more: National Library of Medicine</p>
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Funeral Costs

In the article [“How much does a funeral cost in 2024?”](#) (USA Today, October 24, 2023), the writers (Rebecca Lake, Heidi Gollub, and Kara McGinley) state: “Knowing how much a funeral costs and what to expect with funeral planning can help you avoid leaving your loved ones facing a steep bill after you’re gone. It can also help you prepare for any expenses you might incur when planning a funeral for a parent or another loved one.”

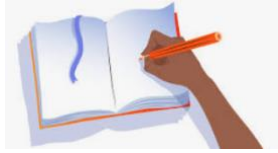
Our class researched two options:

Option	Estimated Costs
<p>Cremation is a method of final disposition of a deceased body through burning, which may serve as a funeral or post-funeral rite and as an alternative to burial. In some countries, cremation on an open-air pyre is an ancient tradition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average cost of cremation is \$6,970 • In Georgia, the minimum cost of cremation is at least \$800 • An urn may cost around \$500
<p>Burial is the method of laying one’s body to rest within the ground. The body is normally placed in a casket that is sealed by family members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average burial cost in Georgia is \$6,232 for an adult • Generally, burial costs between \$5,000 - \$8,000

Learn more:

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial>
- <https://www.funeralocity.com/average-funeral-price/ga>
- <https://www.wagesandsons.com/cremation-services>

Discussion Questions & Journal Prompts



Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. When you imagine your perfect utopia, what do you see?

*Note: inciting question written by Amanda Watkins, Line Producer, *Furlough's Paradise*

2. How does it feel (emotionally and/or physically) to miss someone, to experience grief or regret?

3. Describe 1 person with whom you have an unwavering bond, a forever connection.

4. Playwright a.k. payne shared: "a lot of the play is about presence, how we witness each other, and how we share space together."

- What does it mean to be "present"?
- Which situations and spaces allow you to feel most present?

Pre-Show Journal Prompt

Revisit the vocabulary list on page 6 of this study guide. Compose a poem that incorporates 3-5 of the words from the list. Optional: your poem may be a haiku, comprised of 3 lines (5 syllables in line 1, 7 syllables in line 2, and 5 syllables in line 3).

Post-Show Discussion Questions

1. This production marks the 20th anniversary of the Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, which features emerging writers from MFA programs across the county. In your opinion, what makes this play most relevant now, and to the City of Atlanta?

2. Although not physically imprisoned (like Sade), Mina does not read as emotionally "free." Which aspects of Mina's life contribute most to her emotional imprisonment?

3. What is the difference between happiness and joy?

- Which moments from the play would you define as moments of true joy?

4. How did this production fulfill the set & setting intentions of the playwright?

place: a one-bedroom apartment on dayton rd. that feels at once a little lived in and a little sparse; a window and a door leading to a rickety balcony, a great couch maybe with some holes, a door leads to a bathroom with a leaky bathtub faucet that always falls off, a bookshelf containing *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* and other books bout healing; everything is a bit old. lashonda's urn upon a shelf. pictures of edward, nana and pop adorn the walls.

Post-Show Journal Prompt

Imagine a future for Mine and Sade, years from now. Where are they in their lives, long after this play ends and the correctional officer arrives? What do you hope, for each of them?

Works Cited

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