

Monologue 1 - from *Fati's Last Dance*

Fati's Last Dance is an off-beat comedy about body image, cultural identity, grief, and legacy. Fatima Labelle, the acidic daughter of two iconic professional dancers from Haiti, has returned home to care for her sharp tongued, chain smoking, cane wielding mother. Struggling with depression that has her stuck on the couch, Fatima is pushed into the spotlight when her father is posthumously honored with a prestigious award.

The following monologue is from Act 1, scene 1. Fatima and her mother get into a heated argument about Fatima's lack of motivation. When her mother suggests Fatima be more like her sister Roni, Fatima's arch-nemesis, Fatima loses it. Unable to cope, Fatima escapes into her "t.v. fantasy world"; addresses audience.

FATIMA

Does she really think I'm that shallow? I have a Bachelors degree in Political Science. I was the President of Amnesty International in High School. I spent half a year with Volunteers for Humanity, planting trees in the Amazon Rainforest. I don't care how pretty Roni is, she's evil. And the two of them together are like, like Elvira, and, Evilene - sucking at my blood. I swear, if Roni showed up here tomorrow, I would ease my big butt down the road, right back to Brazil. As much as I hated working for Volunteers for Humanity - the heat, the rain, the bugs - at least they treated me like I meant something. Regardless of what I looked like. Hell, them aborigines thought I was a fox. Especially (She makes a clicking, guttural sound). That was his name. (Makes the sound) used to serenade me in the mornings with his Ilú drum.

It reminded me of when Daddy used to warm up in the mornings. The studio was right under my bedroom. I used to put my ear to the floor just to hear the clickity-clack of his tap shoes. (Makes the sound) wasn't much of a dancer, but man could he play them drums. He wanted to marry me. And I was so messed up that I actually considered it. But I eventually came to my senses. I mean, what was I going to do? Spend the rest of my life hiding behind people who were even uglier than-- I didn't mean that. Did I just say that? He wasn't ugly. None of them were. They were beautiful, gentle souls. And that's not why I left. I left because Ma needed me. She needed me, and I came. Like I always do. But ask Ma who really cares, and it's Roni this, and Roni that, and-- Let me tell you something about Roni. She's selfish, she's loud, she's ignorant, and she can't dance to save her life. She never could. Still, all I ever hear is, "Oh my god, your sister is Ronielle LaBelle? From America's Next Top Model Cycle 66?" Bitch ain't even win. Soon as she opened her big mouth? Kicked her ratchet behind off in the third week. But she bounced right back up on her perfect little booty. She went on to "Surreal Psuedo-Celebrity Rap Challenge". After that she did "Celebrity Apprentice", then "Dancing With the Stars", and she's spent the past two years starring on "Real Wives of the NFL". And she's not even married! She is L.A.'s reigning Reality show Queen. And I'm stuck here plucking Evilene's eyebrows.

Monologue 2 - from *Deux Femmes on the Edge of a Revolution*

Deux Femmes on the Edge of a Revolution

is about an unlikely alliance that is formed between two women in the midst of the world's first successful slave revolt in San Domingue, 1792.

The following monologue is in Act 1, Scene 3.

Cecile, an enslaved African woman, was out all night, participating in a sacred ceremony to mark the beginning of the uprising. The French woman she works for warns her about the massacres of rebellious slaves, and even threatens to tell the master. This is Cecile's response.

(for clarity - Cecile was just asked if the men who were massacred the night before were close to her)

CÉCILE

They are all close to me. They are all my brothers, all my sisters, my fathers, and mothers... This is what your people will never comprehend because the hearts of your people are not constructed like ours. You will never understand what it is to be bound by blood, by tradition, by sacred decree. The man they kill heir soir? En Afrique he would be a King. His father was a great warrior and medicine man. Me? My grandmere was a Queen. This is why I have no regard for what you believe, or what any piece of paper will tell you. I know who I am. And yes, when the dogs bark like this, they have been ordered to attack. You see, your husband is not man enough to draw blood himself. But you know all about his manhood, en? There will be another massacre tonight, in fact. You should come and watch with the others. Your husband will order one of us to take a machete and remove a finger, or an ear, and as the dogs begin to salivate they will watch this man writhe in pain, and watch the dogs become mad with hunger, then they release. The audience will gasp, some will applaud, some laugh, laugh as the dogs eat a man alive. A warrior, a chief, a King, fed to a pack of wild, dirty animals. You see, Madame, while you lay here touching yourself you have no idea of the evil we face each day. I have seen death, I have tasted death, and I will happily die myself before I EVER belong to you. So if you want to tell your husband, I will not stop you. The death he will soon face is far worse than anything he can ever do to me. Mark my word. His day of reckoning soon come, Madame. Sooner than you think.

Monologue 3 - From *Fall* (a one act play)

Tey, who is the primary care giver for her mother, who suffers from dementia, butts heads with the home health aid she hired to help her. Here, she explains to the nurse why she is not more sympathetic towards her mother.

TEY

We not from here. That's right. My Mamma an immigrant just like you. Born and raised in Jamaica. You would never know it, though. Cause we shed that skin a long time ago. That's what she wanted. I told you. You don't know anything about her. All you see is a sick old lady. But she - She was the cold one. Cold, and rough, and...She hated people like you. Your kind, she would say. She hated all kinds of people. And she hated me most of all. Never told me she loved me. Never said much of anything to me 'cept order me around, tell me what a piece of shit I was. Didn't take much for her to put her hands on me. I remember this one time, this one time she pulled the hair right out my scalp. Dragged me so hard across the carpet it changed color. Could never look down at that carpet again without seeing my own shadow screaming across the room. That's the kind of woman she was. Probably still is. Cause you see, people don't change. Nah. They just get tired.

BIO:

France-Luce Benson is a winner of the 41st annual Samuel French OOB Festival, and a Dramatist Guild Fellow 2015-2016. Additional honors and awards include: Winner of the National New Play Network Award for Short Playwriting, Playwright Observer Fellow at the Eugene O'Neil NPC 2016, The Kilroys List- Honorable Mention; Alfred P. Sloan New Play Commission; Ensemble Studio Theatre New Play Commission (2016/2017), Djerassi Resident Artists Program Fellowship recipient, Alfred P. Sloan Award for best screenplay, and Princess Grace Award Runner Up. Her plays have been produced by The Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Fire This Time Festival, City Theatre of Miami, Crossroads Theatre, The Billy Holiday Theatre, Loyola Marymount University, and Duke University, among others. She's been published by Amazon, Routledge, and Indie Theatre Now. She earned an M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University, a B.F.A. in theatre from Florida International University. She is an Associate Professor at St. Johns University and an honored Lifetime Member at the Ensemble Studio Theatre.