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BULLET HOLE

by Gloria Williams

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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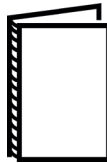


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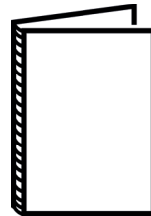
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gloria Williams is an award-winning British actress and playwright, who is a graduate of The Royal Court Theatre Young Writers' Group and Talawa Theatre Company. She wrote *Bullet Hole* which premiered at the Camden Fringe Festival 2017 and was shortlisted for the Alfred Fagon Choice Award.

Her most notable work to date, *Monday*, garnered widespread acclaim at international festivals. *Monday* was performed at New York's Samuel French Off Broadway One Act Play Festival at The Manhattan Repertory Theatre in Times Square. It premiered in the UK at The Lost One Act Play Festival, winning 'Best Overall Production', as judged by *The Times*' critic, Jeremy Kingston.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have always been passionate about exposing the issues affecting the black community. My first play, *Monday*, explored child abuse in a Black British religious family.

I developed *Bullet Hole* as I believed writing a play about Female Genital Mutilation was a good platform to condemn an old tradition which oppresses women. This brutal practice is still present in our current time, worldwide and is not spoken about enough. I hope that the production serves to raise awareness, using drama as a tool to educate audiences.

Gloria Williams
September 2018

Bullet Hole was first produced by Freedom Tongues & Naiad Productions in association with Park Theatre in Park90, London, on 2 October 2018, with the following cast and creatives:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| CLEO | Gloria Williams |
| EVE | Doreene Blackstock |
| WINNIE | Anni Domingo |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Writer | Gloria Williams |
| Producers | Gloria Williams (Freedom Tongues) Lara Genovese (Naiad Productions Ltd) |
| Director | Lara Genovese |
| Creative Assistant | Emma Zadow |
| Sound Designer | Ed Clarke |
| Lighting Designer | Rajiv Pattani |
| Designer | Lara Genovese |
| Photography | Naiad Photography |
| Deputy Stage Manager | Ricky McFadden |
| Social Media Marketing | Roberto Landi |

ABOUT PARK THEATRE

Park Theatre was founded by Artistic Director, Jez Bond and Associate Artistic Director, Melli Marie. The building opened in May 2013 and, with four West End transfers, two National Theatre transfers and ten national tours in its first four years, quickly garnered a reputation as a key player in the London theatrical scene. Park Theatre has received two Olivier nominations, won an Offie for Best New Play (*The Revlon Girl*) and won The Stage's Fringe Theatre of the Year in 2015.

Park Theatre is an inviting and accessible venue, delivering work of exceptional calibre in the heart of Finsbury Park. We work with writers, directors and designers of the highest quality to present compelling, exciting and beautifully told stories across our two intimate spaces.

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Our Creative Learning strategy seeks to widen the number and range of people who participate in theatre, and provides opportunities for those with little or no prior contact with the arts.

In everything we do we aim to be warm and inclusive; a safe, welcoming and wonderful space in which to work, create and visit.

★★★★★ "A five-star neighbourhood theatre" Independent

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Associate Artistic Director | Melli Marie

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Administrator | Melissa Bonnelame

Theatre Intern | Kerry Oreo

Community Engagement Manager | Nina Graveney-Edwards

Learning Care & Access Coordinator | Lorna Heap

Duty Venue Managers | Barry Card, Shaun Joynson, Lorna Heap,
Amy Allen

Head of Food and Beverage | Brett Reynolds

Bar Staff | Sally Antwi, Victoria Amankwa, Gemma Barnett, Florence Blackmore, Grace Boateng, Calum Budd-Brophy, Robert Czibi, Jack De Deney, Adam Harding-Khair, Philip Honeywell, Matthew Littleson, Matthew McCallion, Jack Mosedale, Ryan Peek, Alice Pegram, Maisie Sadgrove, Mitchell Snell

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Charities on board: UnCut/Voices, Council of Ex-Muslims, The Vavengers, Safe Hands For Girls, 28 Too Many, National FGM Centre, La Fraternité Guinéenne, Forward, Global Media Campaign to End FGM, The Royal College of Midwives, Global Comfort.

Gloria Williams' and Lara Genovese's family and friends, Park theatre team, Sunday Surgery Scripts, Activist, Midwives, Actresses, Volunteers, Survivors and the cast and crew who have dedicated time to make the production possible.



UnCut/Voices



CHARACTERS

CLEO – African British Female, playing age 25–30. Outspoken and feisty young woman who is a survivor of type 3 Female Genital Mutilation. She challenges the traditions and the community by sharing her trauma and her understanding of the social norms.

EVE – African British, playing age 38–43. A survivor of Female Genital Mutilation, she is a nurturing care giver who sits on the fence in regards to the FGM practise. She uses her submission to the culture and her ‘mother-like’ influence on Cleo to compensate for her sexual frustration and confusion.

WINNIE – African Female, playing age 50–70. Sierra Leone accent. An outspoken traditionalist and God-fearing older woman who is a survivor of Female Genital Mutilation. She uses her maturity and experience to influence and enforce younger women to embrace female circumcision.

SETTING

London.

A house in present day.

THE CUTTING

by Anni Domingo

She always knew that her day would come.
Girls are born for this, there is no option,
there is no choice, no right to complain,
no one wants to hear that it is wrong.
Her mother and grandmother survived,
she would too. It is compulsory, so they say.

The women must cut her up, snip at the bud
shave, carve, level it out, infibulate
that devil's tongue between her legs,
to give her a stainless, sinless body.
She too carries this burden of femininity,
her destiny of pain, so they say.

The women talk in low voices, ready for the task.
Cold breeze blows and sends warning signs.
Stripped naked, stretched apart, each limb
firmly held, by them, the holders of torso,
legs and arm, she is obedient and silent.
Her scream must be stitched in, so they say.

Pain eats into her flesh, it comes in waves
each worse than the one before, an ocean
of awareness, lost in a world of agony.
Unconscious, she cannot scream stop.
The lips sewn up leave only a little opening,
to answer the call of nature, so they say.
Herb paste soothe where vaginal lips had been.
Legs tied together with ropes from thighs to toes,
no moving, no writhing, she waits to heal.
Seal up that place, learn to sit, to stand,
do not bend or move those legs apart.
Practice the mermaid walk, so they say.

Now she's conscious of her marriage plight to come,
painful breaking through to create a passage again,
aware of birth dilemmas waiting to ambush her,
doubling the chances she might die, knows bitter
tears will flow at every stage for the rest of her life.
But she is clean and purified now, or so they say.

When will it stop, this perpetual hurt and abuse
of girls left with scars that will never heal?
We and our pain must ever grow up together
while we blindly seek something to separate us.
Without organs intact this is not a celebration,
this is our agonising eternal punishment. So she says.

ACT I

Scene One

It is mid-morning. CLEO has been staying in the room for three days, EVE enters the bedroom singing.

EVE PRINCESS GBEOFIA, PRINCESS GBEOFIA, THE STORY OF THE PREGNANT VIRGIN, QUEEN OF BEAUTY, QUEEN OF BEAUTY. THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WHOLE VILLAGE, WAITING, WANTING TO FIND HER PRINCE, A CREATURE COMES TO THE PALACE HOPING FOR HER HAND IN MARRIAGE, HE COMES WITH HER FAVOURITE FOOD,

PRINCESS GBEOFIA! PRINCESS GBEOFIA!

THE STORY OF THE PREGNANT VIRGIN, QUEEN OF BEAUTY.

Lights up. EVE is sewing a red silk gown whilst CLEO lays on the bed next to a doll.

Wake up Sleepin' Beauty. Dat's what I tell my husband to call me, Sleepin' Beauty. Me tell him I feel like a born again virgin and I'll die a virgin. He try tellin' me not to share my body wiv nobody – not even a wet finger, and den he himself don't even spill a single drop – I keep talkin' and he don't talk back. I say 'Oh don't worry 'bout me, I'm as tight as a gate, 'cos I wanna enter Heaven one day.' My clart is gettin' older and the heart between my legs too, you know... one side is larger dan the other coz it's stretchin', can you believe dat Cleo? The stitch is stretchin' ...Before I could close my legz and you couldn't see nothin'. Now one side of the stitch peeks thru like it don't wanna be no secret no more – like it ain't forbidden... So...what about a bath Cleo?

Beat.

You wanna have a bath babe?

CLEO *(no answer)*

EVE I love to take a bath...but I hate it at the same time...
It's like you get thirsty for water, but you reakin' of blood.
Women bleed to love. You tek a shower and when the water
hits you – you feel spat on...donta? ...Clee?

CLEO *(no answer)*

EVE Yeh babe...sure. You need a bath babe. Let me know if
you're onnit later yeh? But...but...don't think for a sec dat
my blood isn't as hot or as red yours...

Pause.

CLEO *sleeps. EVE continues singing to herself whilst
moving to the kitchen area.*

Singing.

GENTLE WOMAN, QUIET LIGHT, MORNING STAR SO STRONG
AND BRIGHT, GENTLE MOTHER, PEACEFUL DOVE. TEACH
US WISDOM, TEACH US LOVE.

EVE *continues humming the tune of the song. WINNIE
enters.*

WINNIE Thanks for doing that plate by the way.

EVE Oh I'm not doing a big plate of food this time. I got some
eggs and some toast, coz she's not eating nothing you or
I cook.

WINNIE She'll eat, coz you make some excellent eggs.

EVE I don't know about that. *(Beat)* She needs to smell my
kitchen when I'm mekin some of my potato leaf stew and my
pepper chicken...oh yeh, she'll yam up my food. Hey Aunt
Winnie you know some places they throw away a potato
leaf thinkin' its dirty.

WINNIE I know! And to think we cook it to perfection. I'll
never forget the day my old Jamaican colleague said she

saw Akees in the vegetable market smashed on the ground on her trip to Lagos. Stepped on, uncared. Made her want to start her own cookery business.

EVE Too right. I love givin' some dirty potato leaves a make-over, get the palm oil right and you got your yummy stew. (*Beat*) She *is* beautiful, lookin' so peaceful laying with her dolly. Since she was brought here from her husband's, the only thing she mutters about is sum crap from those leaflets she reads.

WINNIE That's what the clinics has been hypnotising her with. Please.

EVE It's the feeling she wants.

WINNIE So you actually got her talking?

EVE Kinda. It's like living with a sound that don't make sense.

WINNIE Just like that dog next door.

EVE The labrador? I swear that dog has funny little ways of telling you something's wrong.

WINNIE What's wrong is it's still running free.

EVE I swear it barks so much it makes me wanna hold it in my arms and give it life. I loved a dog as a child, used to tell all my troubles to it.

WINNIE That dog needs to be neutered, keep it docile, stop it from running wild. That's what's wrong with the world.

EVE Did Kareem call?

WINNIE No your husband did not call.

EVE OK. Probably couldn't get service from Freetown. (*Beat*) I'm just done. He don't like no dress I sew for him. By the time he decides to lay me down, I'll be in the cemetery.

WINNIE Do not be negative. A man enjoys a narrow passage. Your husband's a grown-up man who still needs to drip. So there's hope.

EVE Even sum red scraps I stitch together. Every stitch I sew is like a kiss from me.

WINNIE Well keep on stitching till you get that kiss.

EVE You mean for me to wait? Us chicks wait our whole lives, for breasts, for proposals...

WINNIE Oh just stop that talk.

EVE Aunt Winnie it's true. My man don't chat or talk to me unless he's prayin'. I be cussin' – I be screamin' for him to hold me and he still don't even talk.

CLEO is crying from the bed.

Silence.

EVE and WINNIE act busy, ignoring her cries. This happens for a few moments.

I better go check on her.

WINNIE Relax. Don't be so quick to jump when she moans. She's not moaning for you.

EVE She could have had another nightmare.

A moment later. EVE and WINNIE keep themselves busy and ignore CLEO. CLEO gives a few more cries, whilst EVE looks painfully uncomfortable.

I better give Cleo her eggs.

EVE attends to the plate of food.

WINNIE Be careful fixing that broken girl. You might get yourself cut.

EVE exits with the plate of food. EVE goes to CLEO's bed and sits the food down for CLEO who is half awake. EVE tries to get CLEO to take the food. CLEO knocks the tray of eggs offered by EVE on the floor.

EVE (*cleaning up the food*) Naw. Naw. Naw babes. I'm not onnit. You know I don't like bendin' down when I be on my knees cleanin' up dis crap. Note dat, yeh? You gotta put something in your belly. I can't be cleanin' up dese eggs. You'll starve, get skinny and lose dose child givin' hips. (*Whilst still cleaning eggs*) It's da egg that has the choice, not the seed... The seed invades anything and gets pissed off tryna find the egg. You ain't like my husband...he likes his eggs mixed wiv flour...ain't dat weird? It would mek me fill so full in my belly – so tight – like I'm filled with sum big old life... Dat's one ting dat stands between me and my husband

Pause.

Now Cleo, you can chat or not chat. You could be here for a lifetime if you want, in dis dump. How you gonna stomach that? You gimme a chance and I could cook you your favourite food. You like potato leaf? I could play your favourite music and we can could do a lil dance?

CLEO (*no answer*)

EVE Or we could have a lil drink and talk about your favourite thingz in this world, you like that?

CLEO (*no answer*)

EVE Cleo, I need to know your favourite thingz and what you love... Can I tell you about my favourite thingz?

CLEO (*no answer*)

EVE Okay...well... I love to talk about new recipes, making clothes and beauty. Could even do your make-up and nails, could even do your hair. I love painting nails and I love making naturally beautiful girls look even more beautiful...once goin' to the London zoo as a child a peacock showed me its feathers...never seen so many colours on one creature in my life... It had so many colours and shapes, standin' proud... tall...strong. I knew then I loved natural beauty... So, Miss Cleo...can I pretty-up your pretty face to kill time?

CLEO does not answer.

Now don't go blamin' your misery on these lil stitches, it ain't their fault...the seed of the relationship need to be nurtured, naturally.

CLEO continues to ignore her.

So juss take it den, tek his piece like a man, like you never were a chick – like you never had a third dick yourself – like you never hadda hole...just tek the damn dick.

Pause.

Do you want eggs or apples or what?

Scene Two

Later that day EVE enters the bedroom attempting to talk to CLEO again.

EVE Wat's up Clee Clee. Watcha think? Watcha think? You think I'll look cute? (*Showing CLEO the red garment*) Girl you gotta let me fix dat hair so we can both be cute together and dance... I was thinkin' how much I have been missin' my dancing... You know I juss love to dance?

CLEO (*no answer*)

EVE Now I know *you* can dance, I bet you went clubbin' at uni right? You gotta love da drums – I know I can dance to any drum... You love the drums in Sierra Leone, right babe?

WINNIE enters the bedroom with the tray of food.

WINNIE I got you sum fresh eggs *again*, so sit up and get sum protein.

EVE I was tellin' Clee about my dancing. Um, you know, juss, juss comfortin' her from those nightmares.

WINNIE Nightmares? All this talk of nightmares! Forget all that and you've gotta get your strength back for your husband.

CLEO (*pause*) Why? What am I supposed to do with it?

WINNIE So the mute is talking now.

CLEO Yeh *I'm* talking.

WINNIE Don't talk too much—

CLEO *I'm talking.*

WINNIE You juss stop *that* kinda talk.

CLEO Stop what kinda talk? No one gives a flying frigid fuck what I think or feel but I need to stop talking. How you do it?

WINNIE Do what?

CLEO Believe in dese dumb-ass laws made up by dumb people?

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