

The Bluest Eye Audition Pieces

FRIEDA/CLAUDIA

They switch off as speakers, but this is the narration that opens the play.

Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. Not even the gardens fronting the lake show marigolds that year. We thought, at the time, it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow. We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt, just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt. The seeds shriveled and died; Pecola's baby too. There is really nothing more to say—except why. But since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how. Pecola came to us in autumn.

MAMA

This is Mama caring for her children. Her love should come through, regardless of the sternness of the words.

Get on in that bed. How many times do I have to tell you to wear something on your head? You must be the biggest fool in this town. Frieda, stuff and window and get the cod-liver oil. Lord. If I ain't told Claudia once I ain't told her a thousand times, keep that jacket on when the weather starts to cool. I know I don't work my fingers to the bone so my childrens can be laid up in bed sick. Next thing I know, Claudia done pass it to Frieda then we all sick. Lord have mercy and help us all.

CLAUDIA

This is Claudia reflecting on her parents, and their love.

Mama's hands are large and rough. She wraps the flannel around my neck and chest and covers me up with heavy quilts. Mama meant well. In our household there was love. Love from Mama and Daddy, thick and dark. I could smell it—taste it—sweet, musty, with an edge of wintergreen in its base. It stuck, along with my tongue, to the frosted windowpanes. When the flannel came undone in my sleep and I coughed dry and tough in the night, Daddy stood in the doorway while Mama's hands re-pinned the flannel and rested a moment on my forehead. So when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die.

PECOLA:

This is her first extended speech in the show, and the entire character is in it.

Please, God. Make me invisible...Please. Amen. If I squeeze my eyes shut, real tight, little parts of my body go away. I have to do it real slow like, then in a rush. First, off my fingers go, one by one, then my arms disappear, all the way to my elbows. My feet now. Yes, that's right, good. My legs go all at once. When my stomach goes away the chest and neck follow 'long pretty easy. The face is hard too. Almost done, almost. But my eyes is always left. It don't matter how hard I try, my eyes is always left. And I try. Every night I pray for God to deliver me blue eyes.

MRS. BREEDLOVE:

This is the speech in which she goes to the movies and goes from pride in her appearance to being convinced she is ugly.

Anyway I was just sitting there, all in the picture, thinking I looked cute, when I bit down on a piece of candy and my front tooth comes clean out its socket. I could of cried. There I was, five months pregnant, trying to look like Jean Harlow, and my front tooth's gone. Didn't care no more after that. I just settled down to being ugly, and goin' to them pictures just made me more ugly. Then Cholly starting into makin' fun of the way I looked and that hurt me somethin' terrible. So, me and Cholly was fighting even more. I swear I tried to kill him, but he didn't hit me too hard, I guess 'cause I was pregnant. He used to make me madder than anything I knowed. I 'spect I made him mad too, and so that was just what our life looked like from then on.

MAUREEN:

Maureen is very knowledgeable and also a little full of herself, but she means well. She is talking to Pecola, Claudia and Frieda.

My name is Maureen Peal. We just moved here. Your name is Pecola? Wasn't that the name of the girl in *Imitation of Life*? The picture show, you know. Where this mulatto girl hates her mother 'cause she's black and ugly, but then she cries at the funeral. It was real sad. Everybody cries in it. Anyway, when it comes back I'm going to see it again. My mother has seen it four times. My mother told me that a girl where we used to live went to the beauty parlor and asked the lady to fix her hair like Hedy Lamarr's and the lady said, "Yeah, when you grow some hair like Hedy Lamarr's!"

PECOLA:

I take the same sidewalk, past the same crack. Past the same dandelions. Come to think of it, maybe they are weeds. Yes, they are ugly. Ugly weeds. Nobody would think a weed is pretty. You would have to be stupid to think a weed is pretty. (She stomps on the dandelion.) I sit on the edge of the empty playground. I like the playground when it is empty. It is safe and quiet. Before I eat my Mary Janes, I look at each one. Each pretty little girl. Each girl's name is Mary Jane and she has blonde curls and big blue eyes. And she looks at me with those pretty eyes and she is my friend. I eat the candy, and it is almost like I am Mary Jane. Lovely, lovely Mary Jane. Beautiful, happy Mary Jane.

CHOLLY:

Cholly here is discussing his childhood and his parentage.

'Bout all Aunt Jimmy would tell me 'bout my daddy was he didn't stay around long enough to see Mama's stomach get big with me. Hard to say how my life with Aunt Jimmy was. Seems like you just take life as it comes when you're up in the middle of it. I do recollect sometimes when I be watching Aunt Jimmy cross the table, eating collard greens with her fingers or sucking on her gold teeth, I would wonder if it might have been just as well if I died there on that junk heap where my mama left me.

CHOLLY:

This is Cholly narrating the climax of the play, when he attacks Pecola. He is speaking and using his name in the third-person.

Cholly say her dimly and could not tell what he saw or what he felt. He became aware that he was uncomfortable; but then, like so many times before, his uncomfortableness started to feel like pleasure. Then guilt. Then pity. Then love. She was just a child, why wasn't she happy? He wanted to break her neck. Why did she have to look so whipped? What could he do for her—ever? What could he give to her? What could a burned-out black man say to the hunched back of his eleven-year old daughter? If he looked into her face, he would see those haunted, loving eyes.

SOAPHEAD CHURCH:

Soaphead meets Pecola and, in exchange for murdering his neighbor's dog, agrees to cast a spell to give Pecola her blue eyes. Here, he writes to God.

Dear God: The purpose of this letter is to familiarize you with facts which have either escape your notice, or which you have chosen to ignore. A little black girl came to me. Do you know what she came for? She came for blue eyes. New blue eyes, she said. Like she was buying shoes. "I'd like a pair of new blue eyes." She must have asked you for them for a very long time, and you haven't replied. She came to me. Did you forget about the children? Yes. You forgot. You let them go wanting, crying next to their dead mothers. You forgot, Lord. You forgot how and when to be God.

SOAPHEAD CHURCH:

Here, Soaphead gives his sales pitch.

Elihue Micah Whitcomb, aka Soaphead Church. Spiritualist. Psychic Reader and Interpreter of Dreams. If you are unhappy, discouraged, or in distress, I can help you. Does bad luck seem to follow you? Has the one you loved changed? I can help. Questions of truth, honesty, faith and deceit—I will reveal the truth. I will tell you who your enemies and friends are, and if the one you love is true or false.