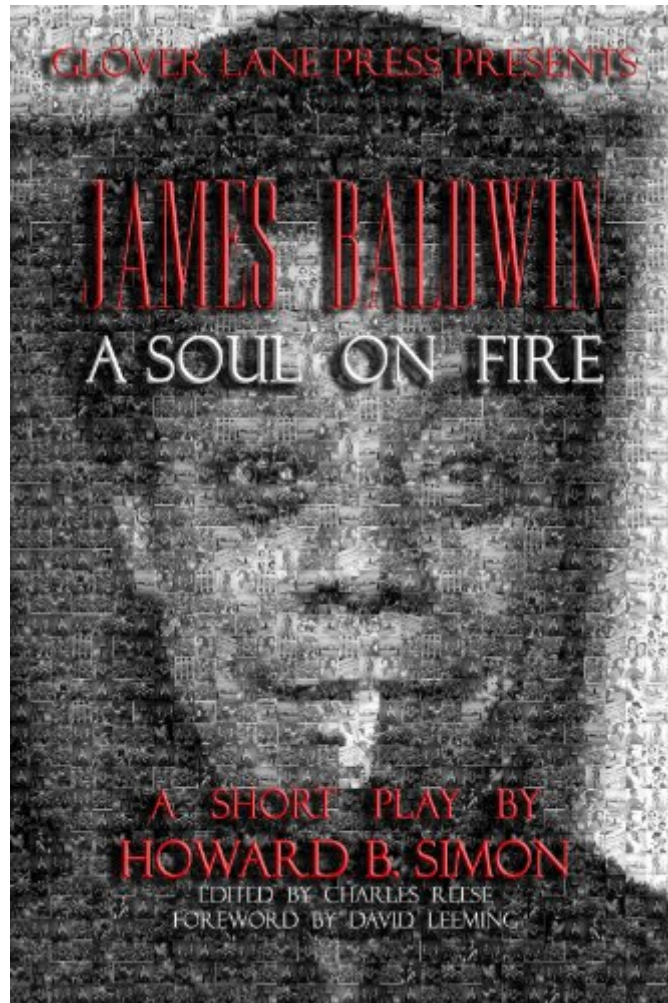


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# JAMES BALDWIN A SOUL ON FIRE A Short Play By HOWARD B. SIMON



## Synopsis

JAMES BALDWIN A SOUL ON FIRE a short play by HOWARD B. SIMON....Edited by Charles Reese, Introduction By David Leeming, Afterword by Forrest McClendon! Book cover and interior design by Azaan Kamau. The year 2012 marks the beginning of a year long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the passing of author/civil rights activist, James Baldwin (1924-1987). In honor of this milestone and to pay homage to the legacy of Mr. Baldwin--, James Baldwin: A Soul on Fire, the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway play by Howard. B. Simon (1962-2000) in association with The Charles Reese Experience and Azaan Kamau/ Glover Lane Press is proud to publish and distribute the official play version in preparation for a book signing/reading series. JAMES BALDWIN: A SOUL ON FIRE is a two character short play which re-imagines what happens when writer/activist James Baldwin invites Lorraine Hansberry, Harry Belafonte and Lena Horne to a round table discussion on race relations with Attorney General Robert Kennedy on May 24, 1963? This theatrical play witnesses a day in the life of James Baldwin as he prepares for this lesser known historical secret meeting in New York City--three months prior to the March on Washington. This uniquely structured play explores the hidden recesses of Baldwin's innermost passions. The introduction for this rare book was written by David Leeming, James Baldwin's actual biographer! The book cover was custom designed by Azaan Kamau of Glover Lane Press. The book cover image actually consists of 2000 tiny separate images from the 1963 Civil Rights Era. The result is a beautiful photo mosaic of James Baldwin! WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT JAMES BALDWIN: A SOUL ON FIRE!

• "The best sort of theatrical biography; the sort that thoroughly entertains. With humor, style and raw emotion, *A Soul on Fire* embraces its chosen territory with enthusiasm. All stage biographies should be served so well."

• David DeWitt, New York Times

• "This play is wonderful and should be on theatre schedules around the world!"

• Emmy Award Winner, Doris Roberts (*Everybody Loves Raymond*)

• "Playwright Howard Simon conjures up a dilemma that neatly captures the conflict Baldwin faced between his art and his activism."

• Charles McNulty, The Village Voice

• "A powerful piece of theatreâeveryone should experience this project!"

• Emmy Award Nominee, CCH Pounder ( *Avatar* )

• "Howard Simon's performance play, James Baldwin: A Soul on Fire is an engrossing poetic display of the religious, political, and internal turmoil that marked the life of one of the great writers of the 20th century"

• Jeanette Toomer, Back Stage The play is very moving and highly engaging. My sister, Lorraine would be honored."

• Mamie Hansberry (sister of playwright, Lorraine Hansberry)

• "There are only two actors in this story, but you feel the stage is filled with many more"

• Lisa Giordano, Show Business News

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

James Baldwin's Soul is Still On Fire!by Leslye "Joy" Allen, Historian, Educator, Arts Advocate, Doctoral StudentCopyright Â© 2012 by Leslye Joy AllenOn Thursday, May 23, 1963, writer and activist James Baldwin met privately with Robert F. Kennedy at Kennedy's home in McLean, Virginia. Baldwin was infuriated by the virulence meted out on peaceful civil rights protestors by Birmingham, Alabama police. Robert Kennedy got an earful.A second meeting was hastily held the next day, this time at Robert Kennedy's New York City apartment. However, on that Friday, May 24, Baldwin brought along a group that can best be described as a "civil rights arsenal"!Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne, playwright Lorraine Hansberry, Rip Torn, Dr. Kenneth Clark, freedom rider Jerome Smith, attorney Clarence B. Jones, Edwin C. Berry of Chicago's Urban League, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau arrived at this meeting at Baldwin's request.Baldwin's group came to discuss and complain to Robert Kennedy and Burke Marshall (head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights wing) about President John F. Kennedy's failure to use the power of the presidency to stem the police violence that continued to plague peaceful civil rights protesters.The meeting of this group of individuals was not particularly successful. Yet, Baldwin's outspokenness, audacity, and literary genius was--and remains--a source of both political

and artistic inspiration. My good friend, actor-writer-curator-activist, and now editor, Charles Reese is but one of many keepers of Baldwin's legacy. Reese--who stays in Southwest Atlanta whenever he is in town--is pulling double duty in the legacy preservation department.

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