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NEW YORK

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THE YEAR IN CULTURE AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS

ALL THE VERY **BEST** AND A LITTLE OF THE **WORST** OF 2006

BRILLIANT! DESPICABLE!

THEATER

10. *THE FOUR-WAY SPEECH IN YOUNG JEAN LEE'S 'SONGS OF THE DRAGONS FLYING TO HEAVEN'*



Considering that it's billed as "A Show About White People in Love," and that it begins with a close-up video of the playwright being slapped in the face—repeatedly, for several minutes, hard enough to draw tears—it says something for Young Jean Lee that she still manages to save her play's weirdest, funniest stroke for near the end. In unison, four Asian-American actresses deliver a speech in the author's voice that rampages through race and gender sensitivities, mocking patriarchal white men, hypocritical white women, angry minorities, and Lee herself. "People think of me as this empowered Asian female, but really I'm just a fucking white guy," they announce. Downtown saw some fine work in 2006, like Adam Bock's unnerving office nightmare *The Thugs*, but Lee's gutsy, taboo-busting speech was the clearest indication that the avant-garde isn't dead, and has never been funnier.