



1990

Silk

66 x 67 inches (167.6 x 170.2 cm)

**FAITH RINGGOLD**

American, born 1930

### LET'S LOOK

What are the different people doing in this picture?

Which **characters** appear more than once? Where?

Where does this story take place? What do you see that tells you that?

### LET'S LOOK AGAIN

Why do you think the artist made this picture into a quilt?

What might flying **symbolize**?

Some characters are flying.  
Where would you go if you could fly?

## "TAR BEACH 2" QUILT

Faith Ringgold, who created this "story quilt," is both an artist and author. This quilt tells the story of Cassie Louise Lightfoot, the **protagonist** in Ringgold's children's book, *Tar Beach*.

Several parts of the story are included in the picture. In the **foreground**, Cassie's parents play cards with their friends on the tar roof ("tar beach") of their apartment building in New York City. Cassie and her brother Bebe lie on a mattress nearby, looking up at the stars. A picnic dinner awaits them. Wet clothes and sheets hang to dry, flapping in the night wind. The George Washington Bridge stands tall behind the colorful buildings in the **background**.

In the book, Cassie dreams that she can fly and overcome any obstacle she faces. In the quilt, she appears twice in the sky, claiming the bridge for herself and giving her father the Union Building so that he won't have to worry about employment. Ringgold included parts of the story in white writing in the purple sky.

To create Cassie's story, Ringgold took inspiration from her own childhood in Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City. Much of her art explores social and political **themes** and features powerful women, especially African American women. For example, Cassie's ability to fly gives her freedom and power to achieve anything she sets her mind to. At the end of the book, Cassie proclaims that anyone can fly, stating, "All you need is somewhere to go you can't get to any other way. The next thing you know, you're flying among the stars."

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