



# Dancing in the Dark (Vintage International)

*Caryl Phillips*

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Caryl Phillips

## **Dancing in the Dark (Vintage International)** Caryl Phillips

In this searing novel, Caryl Phillips reimagines the life of the first black entertainer in the U.S. to reach the highest levels of fame and fortune. After years of struggling for success on the stage, Bert Williams (1874—1922), the child of recent immigrants from the Bahamas, made the radical decision to don blackface makeup and play the “coon.” Behind this mask he became a Broadway headliner—as influential a comedian as Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, and W. C. Fields, who called him “the funniest man I ever saw, and the saddest man I ever knew.” It is this dichotomy at Williams’ core that Phillips explores in this richly nuanced, brilliantly written novel, unblinking in its attention to the sinister compromises that make up an identity.

*From the Trade Paperback edition.*

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