

The Brother/Sister Plays draws on elements, icons and stories from the Yoruba cosmology.

If there is no dialogue following a character's name, it means there is a silent action or pause being played at that moment.

The stage directions in a character's speech are meant to be said as well as played.

In the Red and Brown Water was produced in January 2010 by The Studio Theatre (Joy Zinoman, Founding Artistic Director; Keith Alan Baker, Managing Director/Artistic Director, 2nd Stage) in Washington, D.C. It was directed by Serge Seiden; the set design was by Luciana Stecconi, the costume design was by Reggie Ray, the lighting design was by Michael Giannitti, the sound design was by Eric Shimelonis; the dramaturg was Sarah Wallace, the production stage manager was John Keith Hall. The cast was as follows:

OYA	Raushanah Simmons
ELEGBA	Mark Hairston
OGUN SIZE	Jahi A. Kearse
MAMA MOJA, THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU	Denise Diggs
NIA	Shaunté Corrina Tabb
AUNT ELEGUA	Deidra LaWan Starnes
SHUN	Shannon Alexandria Lillie Dorsey
SHANGO	Yaegel T. Welch
THE MAN FROM STATE, O LI ROON	Michael Harris
EGUNGUN	Ricardo Frederick Evans

CHARACTERS

OYA	begins the play a girl and ends it a woman; a woman of color
ELEGBA	begins the play a boy and ends it a man, godbrother to Oya; of Creole heritage
OGUN SIZE	with Oya for a time, nephew of Aunt Elegua; a man of color
MAMA MOJA, THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU	mother of Oya, godmother to Elegba; a mother of color
AUNT ELEGUA	aunt to Ogun, godmother to Oya; a woman of color
NIA	girl from around the way
SHUN	girl from around the way, friend to Nia; a fair woman of color
SHANGO	with Oya for a time; a dark man of color
THE MAN FROM STATE, O LI ROON	a white man
EGUNGUN	a DJ, a boy from around the way

TIME

Distant present

PLACE

San Pere, Louisiana

PROLOGUE

*The lights come up.
The cast is standing in a line downstage.
The men all begin to hum, a sad sweet hum,
Thick like the early morning mist.
They move upstage.
Halfway through the journey
Oya is left center stage, alone.
She lies down on the ground, holds her head
And stares up to the sky. Her lines are said from this position
like a chant or moan.
The others continue upstage, speaking their lines, the men
still humming.
Until finally they stand still.
The cast glows like a pantheon of deities, ending the
Prologue.*

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

OYA

(Sharp breath out)

Ah!

AUNT ELEGUA

I don't know all . . .

MAMA MOJA

Nobody does.

AUNT ELEGUA

But say she ain't even scream.

OYA

Oya in the air Oya . . .

SHUN

Say it sound like the wind . . .

MAMA MOJA

Like a breeze . . .

OYA

A breeze over Oya.

SHUN

That's what they say?

MAMA MOJA, AUNT ELEGUA AND SHUN

Huh.

OYA

Oya . . . Oya . . .

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

AUNT ELEGUA

She enters.

OYA

Oya.

MAMA MOJA

Holding her head.

OYA

Oya gal . . .

SHUN

Laying up somewhere.

MAMA MOJA

Staring out somewhere.

MAMA MOJA, AUNT ELEGUA AND SHUN

Somewhere . . .

ALL

Huh.

MAMA MOJA

Lord God . . .

OYA

Oya . . .

SHUN

That girl

OYA

Oya.

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

AUNT ELEGUA

Sweet smiling

OYA

Oya in the air . . .

MAMA MOJA

Sad in the eyes

ACT 1

OYA

In the air . . . Oya

AUNT ELEGUA

That's what they say.

SHUN

That's what I know . . .

OYA

Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA

Beautiful girl.

SCENE 1

MAMA MOJA

Mama Moja enters the space . . .
Where you going Oya?

OYA

Gotta go. Track meet.

MAMA MOJA

No.

OYA

No?

MAMA MOJA

Moja looks at Oya like, "What I say?"
What I say?

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

OYA

Mama I . . . You . . .
What you mean?

MAMA MOJA

A mother's stare . . .

OYA

Mama please!

MAMA MOJA

I'm tired of you coming in here
All skin't up from running.
Running got your body all hurt.

OYA

I ain't hurt. I'm fine.
I just . . . I have to run today.

MAMA MOJA

You must not be too good
You come in here all breathin
Hard, dirty and funky and all,
Ankles all swollen. You a good
Runner?

OYA

Yes Mama.

MAMA MOJA

You sure?

OYA

Yeah I'm sure!

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

MAMA MOJA

Oh yeah? That's what they say, huh?

OYA

That's right. I know you heard.
I'm Oya.

MAMA MOJA

Laughing! UH-HUH!
I know that's right!
Now that's what I wanna hear!
You gon out there and show them
Girls how to.

OYA

Oya laughs at her crazy mama.
You crazy.

MAMA MOJA

You my favorite Oya Jean Fair.

OYA

I'm your only Mama Moja.

MAMA MOJA

I know that.
Trying to see if you know.
Let me look at you.

OYA

Here I go.

MAMA MOJA

They stand for each other.
A reflection ...

OYA

A face.

MAMA MOJA AND OYA

Her own.

MAMA MOJA

(Sharp breath)
Ah!
Moja's breath comes loose.
She catches her knee.

OYA

You okay Mama?

MAMA MOJA

Gon head to your meet.
Gon head. I be here when you
Get back. Tired just now.

OYA

You sure Mama?

MAMA MOJA

Gon. I don't want you missing this one.
Gon.

OYA

All right.
Oya leaves.

MAMA MOJA

To run her race.

ELEGBA

Enter Lil Legba
Moja!

SCENE 2

MAMA MOJA

Not today Lord ...

ELEGBA

Moja!

MAMA MOJA

Loud as hell ...

ELEGBA

MA MOJA!

MAMA MOJA

Moja steps to the porch.

ELEGBA

MA ...

MAMA MOJA

Lil Legba! What I told you bout hollarin fa me huh?
Screamin my name like that!

ELEGBA

Sorry Moja.
Where Oya?

MAMA MOJA

Runnin . . .

ELEGBA

Already . . .

MAMA MOJA

Always.

ELEGBA

I come to beg some candy or some money to get some.

MAMA MOJA

No.

ELEGBA

I know it's bad for me, I know it but Mama Moja
I have to have it, I need it in my life!

MAMA MOJA

Moja looks at him like, "What I say?"
What I say!

ELEGBA

What I got to do to prove to you I need it?

MAMA MOJA

You don't need it.

ELEGBA

What I got to do to prove I gots to have it?

MAMA MOJA

You can whatever you please,
Telling me what you gots to have,
I ought to spank your tail!
Send you round back to your peoples
So they find out you round here begging.

ELEGBA

They don't mind you giving, Mama Moja,
Sweet Moja. They know you. We love you.

MAMA MOJA

Moja smiles.
You ain't getting no candy Legba.

ELEGBA

Damn.

MAMA MOJA

What you say?

ELEGBA

Somebody say you know dreams.
You understand dreams Mama Moja?

MAMA MOJA

I mayhap.

ELEGBA

Sometimes I come home from the schoolhouse tired . . .

MAMA MOJA

Uh, Lil Legba . . .

ELEGBA

Fall asleep ...
 I dream with messages I can't read yet ...
 Need some help with.
 I know they messages, just don't know who they to,
 Where they from, how to get them there.

MAMA MOJA

Moja sighs. Giving into the lil fucker ...
 What your dreams say Lil Legba?

ELEGBA

I don't know that's what I'm asking you.

MAMA MOJA

Go on Lil Legba ...

ELEGBA

They hurt now these dreams ...

MAMA MOJA

Tell me your dreams lil boy!
 Mumbling to herself,
 Shite'monIain'tgotalldayforthisfoolishness.
 Sorry Lord.

ELEGBA

It's always about the water, my dreams.
 Near it or around it. Sometimes I stand
 In the high tide and I can't breathe but I
 Can breathe. And I walk on the bottom on
 The floor of the waters and they's these people
 Walk alongside me but they all bones and they

Click the bone people, they talk in the click.
 I say, "Where yall going?" And they say, "Just
 Walking for a while." I say, "Don't you want
 To go home ..." They say, "When we walk there, it
 Wasn't there no more." I feel bad for them ...
 Then they click and I come up on the mud part,
 Like they send me to the land part, And I'm
 Sitting there waiting 'cause I know they want
 Me to wait I wait there looking and on
 Top of the waters is Oya ...
 Lil Legba looks for Moja's reaction.

MAMA MOJA

ELEGBA
 Oya girl floating on top of the water,
 Looking up towards the sky and with no clothes
 She hardly got no clothes on and she got her legs
 Wide ...
 Lil Legba ducks ...

MAMA MOJA

ELEGBA
 And she holding her head on the side with her
 Hand like something ailing her.
 But from her legs blood coming down and it's making the
 pond
 Red ...
 All the water around her red but she
 Ain't in pain Mama Moja she ain't in
 No pain it look like just laying on top of
 That water. Brown skin in the red water

And I stick my hand in the water to make
 It wavy so she see me on the land I want
 To ask her something but she don't look
 At me so I stick my hand in the water to make
 It shake her on top and the water comes back in
 A wave, that red and brown water, wash on me
 And I wake up sweating on my face and wet
 Low down, like that water, between my legs, wet . . .

MAMA MOJA

Mama Moja moves to slap his lil fresh face.

ELEGBA

UHUHYOUTOLDMETOTELLYOU!

MAMA MOJA

Moja standing, can't help rehearing
 All that Lil Legba said . . .
 Gon, Legba, watch Oya run for me.

ELEGBA

What it mean Moja?
 What my dream mean?

MAMA MOJA

Mama Moja looks to the sky.
 It mean you becoming a man Lil Legba,
 My Oya a woman and I'm . . .
 I'm tired just now.

ELEGBA

Lil Legba begins to walk away like the half moon
 In the morning

SCENE 3

The men begin chanting:

EGUNGUN

RUN!

O LI ROON

RUN!

SHANGO

RUN

OGUN SIZE

RUN

EGUNGUN

RUN

O LI ROON

RUN

SHANGO

RUN

EGUNGUN

RUN

O LI ROON

RUN

SHANGO

RUN

OGUN SIZE

RUN

*(Sharp breath
out)*

AH!

(They continue.)

NIA

Look at her!

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

SHUN

Running

AUNT ELEGUA

Gon head Oya!

SHUN

Running

NIA

Her powerful legs . . .

SHUN

Running

AUNT ELEGUA

Pressing that ground!

NIA

Burning it up!

AUNT ELEGUA

Yes she is . . .

NIA AND AUNT ELEGUA

Yea she is!

SHUN

Running

NIA

Faster!

AUNT ELEGUA

Then faster!

NIA

You can barely see where her feet meet the earth.

AUNT ELEGUA

Uh uh barely see where they meet.

NIA

Gon around that track!

SHUN

Running

NIA

Just love to watch her.

SHUN

Huh

Running like that.

AUNT ELEGUA

Gon head girl!

(*The men stop chanting.*)

ALL WOMEN

She won!

ALL

YEAH!

NIA

They all go forward to hug and congratulate.

THE MAN FROM STATE

When The Man from State cuts in front of everyone.
 Oya girl you are blessed . . . Did you see how them
 Other girls couldn't even keep up with you? They just
 Stop running after while and just look at your
 Legs flying around, flying through the air.
 The white man lifts his hat so you could see his eyes,
 Oya gal you got a mean run on you.

OYA

Thank you.
 Kind of you.

THE MAN FROM STATE

Oya gal you come run for me like that? We
 Love to have you at State, love for you to
 Bring in us some championships, I ain't
 Gon lie to you Oya gal we ain't got
 Much in the way of offerin but you
 Come be one in our school, come be one of
 Our number as it were and we treat you
 Right . . . we treat you good.

OYA

I . . . on't know sir I
 Wish I could answer now but I gotta
 Talk to my mama.

THE MAN FROM STATE

Well tell her what I said.
 See what she say. Get back to me . . .
 But come on quick Oya gal. That spot in
 The sun ain't shining eternal.

OYA

Oya breathes and smiles.

OGUN SIZE

That beautiful smile.

SHANGO

But she was bleeding.

ELEGBA

Everyone saw it.

OGUN SIZE

How could they not?

OYA

Oh I . . .

*(The men all step toward Oya.
 The women block them out.)*

OYA

I . . . I just . . .

SHUN

Didn't you know it was coming?

OYA

Well I . . . I mean . . . 'cause of the running . . .
 It gets off and . . .

SHUN

Huh.

NIA

She didn't know.

AUNT ELEGUA

Oya . . .

SHUN

Stupid girl.

SCENE 4

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size on Oya's front porch.
 F F Fine runnin out there.

OYA

Hey Ogun, how you doin?

OGUN SIZE

So, so beautiful . . .
 I mean to, to see you . . .
 I mean to, to see you run like that
 So beautiful.
 Make me almost wanna fall asleep.

OYA

OGUN SIZE

I mean, not 'cause I'm . . . No because you, it's
 It's, it's got this song to it your legs like
 A crickets, but more beautiful but still when
 They . . .

Ogun moves his fingers like legs runnin,
 When they move *like* this they start stir, stirring
 A song in the air . . . like, like a lil lullaby . . .
 Sing-singing to me softly. Move so so
 Fast they start to sing. You know?
 In the a-air, O-Oya in the air.

OYA

Oya sad, smiles.

OGUN SIZE

What's wrong?

OYA

You hurt my heart. When you stutter like that.

OGUN SIZE

I . . . I do that! I don't . . .
 Giving effort to not stutter,
 Mean it Oya.

OYA

I know. It's like I know you . . . What you want to say and
 sometimes when it halts up like that when the words get
 stuck in your chest, when they could come out so sweet
 I just . . . I get sad for you . . . that's all.

OGUN SIZE

Oya I . . . I . . . I . . .

SHANGO

Enter Shango.
 What up, Ogun?

OGUN SIZE

He-Hey . . .

SHANGO

C'mon nigga get it out.

OGUN SIZE

I . . . Hey Shango.

SHANGO

How you doin man?

I see you trying to woo the ladies
Still which yo half-out words.

OGUN SIZE

Oh man stop, stop teasing me.

SHANGO

Nah I ain't teasing you man . . .

You my man Ogun.

OGUN SIZE

Hey Shango . . .

SHANGO

You think I can talk to Oya here for
A minute?

OGUN SIZE

Oh . . . uh . . .

SHANGO

Shango steps in front of Ogun.
Thanks man I preciate it.

OGUN SIZE

Ogun leaves the way he came.

SHANGO

Oya gal, Oya gal.
You ran that race.

OYA

How you doin Shango?

SHANGO

Oh I'm phyne . . .
You know
Shango laughs
I'm fine.

OYA

That's good.

SHANGO

You looked so good out there, girl. So good.
Running
Yeah you was.
Till you started bleeding but still . . .
You know you can't help that.
Nah. But still damn.
He adjusts his dick.
He puts his leg up.
He licks his lips.
I rarely look at dark girls like that,
But you black and phyne.
So I couldn't help it.

OYA

Huh.

SHANGO

Nah don't get all like that.
 Why dark women always
 Got to get mad so quick?

OYA

We can't change color, like the yellow girls when they blush
 So we get mad quick so you can see it in our face.

SHANGO

You crazy girl. Why you so crazy?
 You smell good. Oya how you been running all
 Day and still smell good.

MAMA MOJA

(Offstage)
 'Cause I teach her to wash every day.
 Enter Mama Moja.
 And not to play with trash . . .
 I say Oya gal . . .
 Moja moves in.
 Don't play with trash, hear,
 It gets in yah eyes, baby,
 It gets in yah eyes.

SHANGO

Oh how you doin Ms. Moja.

MAMA MOJA

Evening come Shango.
 Yo mama missing her third born.

When the rent time come she don't pay
 No portion of it for over here . . .
 Think you need to enjoy what she pay for.
 Think you need to be where she prepare a place for you.

SHANGO

You have a good night, Oya.
 Exit Shango.

MAMA MOJA

Some of the nastiest things come wrapped like that . . .

OYA

He all right Mama don't mix words on him,
 He just smelling himself.

MAMA MOJA

The scent strong . . . You sure you don't smell him too?

OYA

Mama!

MAMA MOJA

Boys start smelling and those that was ladies and gentleman
 Something start coming away and they get back to animals
 again
 Sniffin each other.

OYA

He gone Mama, Shango just silly like boys get.
 Mama.

MAMA MOJA

Moja, not listening, folds a little.
Uh.

OYA

Mama!

MAMA MOJA

Moja holds out her hand and waves Oya back.
Just tired.
Take me inside please.

SCENE 5

THE MAN FROM STATE

The Man from State stands.

OYA

Oya looks out forward. Head high.
I don't know how to say this sir. Yes I
Do. First I say thank you, sir, very much I
Wish I could come on with you this year I do.
I love to run. Nobody loving kicking
Up dirt on a track like me. That I know,
That I feel. But I love my mama. And
She been low lately. Low. She say she ain't
Got long. I don't believe her but I do.
And sir you don't know but I'd be lying
If I say I wouldn't go crazy if something
Happened to Moja while I was away.
She say just a year, this year. I stay

With her this while. I will that's what I will do.
But I'll keep training keeping running, always
Running. I know there might not be a chance
Next year but there might be. But there may not be
Moja when I got back . . . So I'ma stay here. To
See her stay or . . . go. Thank you so much sir.
Have a good year.

SCENE 6

OYA

It was late one night,
Early one morning . . .
Ah!
Oya wakes from a dream.

MAMA MOJA

Moja stands in the early
Morning dew, her hair down,
Standing, staring from her porch.

OYA

Oya finds her there.

MAMA MOJA

Moja
Listening. Somewhere . . .
In the distance,

OYA

Near distance . . .

MAMA MOJA

She can hear ol death calling.

OYA

Mama.

AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

Gonna lay down my burdens,

MAMA MOJA

 Moja throws her hand at Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

Down by the riverside

OYA

Telling her to stay back.

AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

Down by the riverside

MAMA MOJA

Stay back.

AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

Down by the riverside. . .

MAMA MOJA

Mama Moja moves
To lay her cross down.

OYA

Oya sees it.

MAMA MOJA

How could she not?

OYA

Mama?
You hear me calling to you.
Listen to me. Like the wind calling you, Mama.

*(Mama Moja begins walking a path led by Aunt Elegua.
Oya tries to follow.)*

OYA

Mama!
Where you going?!

MAMA MOJA

Oya, in the air . . . Oya.
Go on back Oya.
This between me and the Lord.
Gon back. You can't follow.

OYA

But you can stay . . . Hear Mama?
I can't follow but you can stay
You know that now. Stay Mama Moja.

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

MAMA MOJA

Not now, no.

OYA AND MAMA MOJA

Not now.

MAMA MOJA

Gon head to run your race.

AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

I ain't gonna study war no more
Ain't gonna study war no more

SHUN AND AUNT ELEGUA

(Singing)

I ain't gonna study war no more
I ain't gonna study war no more
Ain't gonna study war no more.

OYA

And with tears in her eyes.

MAMA MOJA

Tremors in her body.

OYA

Oya watches her mother . . .

MAMA MOJA

Leave this world.

*(Aunt Elegua waves her hand.
Mama Moja lets out a sharp breath.)*

MAMA MOJA

Ah!

(She collapses.)

OYA

Oya begins to
Weep for her mother.

ELEGBA

Enter Lil Legba, weeping!

SCENE 7

OYA

Oh Lord!

ELEGBA

It ain't right, it ain't right!

OYA

Why is he so loud?
Legba what's wrong?

ELEGBA

Yo mama's dead!

OYA

Lil Legba it's okay, I know . . .
 Trying to comfort him and herself . . .
 She ain't in no more pain!

ELEGBA

What make you think I'm crying for her?

OYA

You say . . . I say Lil Legba why you . . .

ELEGBA

Nah you didn't you say, "Lil Legba what's wrong . . ."
 I tell you, I say, "Yo mama dead," that's what wrong with me.
 I ain't crying for Moja what my tears do for her.

OYA

Not wanting to deal.
 All right now, look.

ELEGBA

Eh I am in grief damnit!
 Thinking.
 You wanna grief with me?

OYA

No Lil Legba . . .

ELEGBA

What you too good to grief and wail with me?
 C'mon woe the while.

OYA

Lil boy!

ELEGBA

Legba, my name Legba . . .

OYA

I know who you . . .

ELEGBA

Legba cries.

OYA

Lil Legba!

ELEGBA

Oh it ain't right this world sometimes!

OYA

No . . . No it isn't.

ELEGBA

Dead Mama Moja, dead. Who will give me lil candies
 When I come by and say hi?

OYA

Legba c'mon now. I will give you . . .

ELEGBA

Legba stops crying.
 Look now . . . I am griefin and moanin, all right?
 Go on in the house if you gon do all that talking.
 Some people ain't got no respect . . .
 Legba moans.

SHANGO

Enter Shango
 Hey Oya girl . . .

OYA

Shango.

SHANGO

I'm sorry bout her passin.

OYA

Thank you.

SHANGO

That always sound funny to me . . .
 Somebody die and you say sorry and they say thank you
 Never sound right to me.

OYA

It don't sound right to me either.
 You got something more clever for me to say?

SHANGO

Nah I ain't accusing you of nothing . . .
 I said it too when my daddy died
 But it never felt right you know?
 Never felt right.

OYA

Oya girl looks to the sky.
 Finds no answer there.

SHANGO

She breathes like the wind.

ELEGBA

Legba sneaks off opposite of how he come.

SHANGO

You look like you stand some company.

OYA

Lil Legba here is . . .

SHANGO

Lil Legba?

OYA

Nothing.

SHANGO

I know I been . . .
 In the past I ain't been right . . .

OYA

You got to be you.

SHANGO

That's what I say. Always be you, and . . .
 People fit together different.
 I fit with you different than I fit with other people
 I got something drawing to you and I feel you drawing to me.
 Shango curls his fingers around Oya's ear and Caresses the
 soft.

OYA

Huh.

SHANGO

So I'm lying? You don't feel nothing for me?

OYA

I ain't say all that.

SHANGO

But then . . . I mean it ain't love . . .
 'Cause if it was love it would easily turn
 Hate how much I get on your nerves.

OYA

That you do.

SHANGO

You get on my nerves too.

OYA

Huh.



SHANGO

But I think I adore you.

OYA

Oya takes a breath . . .

SHANGO

Tasting Shango's drift.
 I like you getting on my nerves
 Sometimes.

OYA

Sometimes.

SHANGO

I'm all right with that.
 I like you most of the time . . .
 Cept you be acting all dark-skinned.

OYA

See . . .
 Niggas.
 You was doing good.

SHANGO

I'm still here, I still doing all right.

OYA

'Cause my mama ain't here to run you off.

SHANGO

You know that ain't right. You know she always here.
 And even if she ain't here, she there.
 Shango points to Oya's heart.
 And here too . . .
 He points to his own.

OYA

Oya breathes.

SHANGO

Like the wind.
 Let me take you inside.

OYA

I don't . . . don't need you to do that.

SHANGO

I didn't say I got to take you inside I asked to let me . . .
 Shango offers his hand.

OYA

Oya sees it.

SHANGO

How could she not?

OYA

They go in . . .

SHANGO AND OYA

Together.

SCENE 8

SHANGO

WHAT!



OYA

YOU HEARD ME!

SHANGO AND OYA

SHANGO AND OYA!

OYA

FROM INSIDE!

SHANGO

YELLING SO LOUD!

SHUN

THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING!

NIA

OKAY, WAKING UP ALL THE PROJECTS!

SHANGO

Damnit Oya!

OYA

Don't cuss me in my house . . .

SHANGO

Eh fuck yo house . . .

It's too early for all this.

OYA

Why did you bring it then?

SHANGO

I ain't start this thunder!

I ain't even get up with the devil this morning!

I just said don't be all hugged up on me.

OYA

This is my house, you sleeping in my bed, next to me!

If I can't be all up on you in my house in my bed

Where I can do it then, show me!

SHANGO

I done told you.

I don't want nobody all up on me

When I'm sleep . . .

That's what the fuck I said . . .

I know I ain't stutter,

That ain't what I do . . .

Shit.

OYA

Coming outside.
Niggas!

AUNT ELEGUA

Aunt Elegua coming down the street.
Oya gal ...
Weeping.
Oya gal!
Moaning.
Yo mama dead and gone!
Come let your Aunt Ele love you.

OYA

Hey Aunt Elegua.

AUNT ELEGUA

I don't know what I am gon do!
Yo mama's dead and gone.

OYA

She been dead for months ...

AUNT ELEGUA

Elegua stops and looks at her smart-ass
Goddaughter.
Huh.
She breaks down again.
And I still ain't figured out what to do ...
You need someone to watch over you!

OYA

I'm fine Aunt Elegua.

AUNT ELEGUA

Me and Moja was close.
Like a sister and now that she gone
I say to myself last night I say self that girl over there
Lonely ...

OYA

I ain't been lonely.

AUNT ELEGUA

In that house without no one to talk to ...

OYA

I'm fine.

AUNT ELEGUA

And here I am call myself a friend to Moja and

SHANGO

Enter Shango.

AUNT ELEGUA

Who this?

OYA

Shango this Elegua.

AUNT ELEGUA

Huh.
Yousa phyne thang ain't you.
Yes sir looka here looka here.
This here your friend Oya girl?

OYA

Yes Shango is my friend.

AUNT ELEGUA

Yall lovers and friends?

OYA

Aunt Ele!

AUNT ELEGUA

Oh honey I'm just asking ain't judging
 Nah nah. Just asking. I wouldn't mind if I do . . .

SHANGO

Do what?

OYA

Huh.

AUNT ELEGUA

Nah girl I was just being silly.
 You sleep here Shango baby?

SHANGO

Sometimes when Oya don't make me go home . . .

OYA

Ey!

AUNT ELEGUA

Yeah girl I figured that's how you did it.

OYA

Aunt Elegua . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Stop all that . . . umming and ahing,
 Standing like you got to-pee, honey.

You don't need to dance for me
 I know the story, I ain't your mama
 You ain't got to splain nothing to me.
 So yall sweet strong on each other or
 This a bitter honeysuckle yall sipping on.
 Who got which in they mouth?

OYA

We just friends Aunt Ele . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

I ain't meddlin in your business.
 I ain't. I got my own business to take care of
 Wondering if yo mama left me anything in the house.
 Something for me?

OYA

There's a box of things I know she would have wanted you
 to have.

AUNT ELEGUA

Thank you girl.
 Gon head and get it,
 I'll keep an eye on God's Heaven for you.

OYA

Oya exits.

AUNT ELEGUA

You ever been with a older woman?

SHANGO

Ain't none of em like that Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA

You stepping out on my godbaby!

SHANGO

She kicks me out.

Sometimes we can't stand the sight of each other . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

But when you make up . . .

SHANGO

It's all in the making up.

AUNT ELEGUA

How she like you to make up to her?

SHANGO

Like all women do . . .

On my knees.

OYA

Oya returns.

AUNT ELEGUA

What you doing now, Oya,

With this freak here?

This boy got a wickedness in his

Stance, a driving in his pants

What a good girl doing with somebody like him . . .

OYA

I ask the same question.

AUNT ELEGUA

You ain't trying to get my baby pregnant is you.

SHANGO

Hell nah! You crazy?

OYA

Hell nah? Why you actin like that?

SHANGO

I ain't trying to have no youngin makin me grown . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

What you care? You trying to get pregnant?

Eh you can't run pregnant Oya.

You still running that man say come on in

A year . . . You ready?

OYA

Yeah Aunt Elegua, I'm running.

SHANGO

To Oya,

Lying.

AUNT ELEGUA

Don't you think it's bout time to show him you still got it

Fall coming ain't it . . .

OYA

It's just spring.

AUNT ELEGUA

You giving me mouth Oya gal,

It ain't saying what it should!

You better listen Ele when she talk yeah!

You better come on now.

Get your nose out that boy and what?

OYA

Get your mind right.

AUNT ELEGUA

There it is. I know you ain't forgot.
Get your books when?

OYA

First.

AUNT ELEGUA

Get some dick when?

OYA

Later.

AUNT ELEGUA

That's right be fast in the feet and not in the ass
C'mon on now. Listen to Ele.
Call up that man get him to see you can
Run like Oya gal so he can step you up.
This asphalt still be burning hot when you get back.

SHANGO

You know that huh?

AUNT ELEGUA

If it ain't one black road work it's another.

OYA

Oya smiles.

ELEGBA

A Lil older Legba enters
Breathing hard laughing breathing.

SCENE 9

SHANGO

Exit Shango.

O LI ROON

O Li Roon enters mad as hell.
Yall better get him, hear!
Catch him before I do! Because if I lay hands
On E-legba . . . I swear fore God!

OYA

What you rushing over here screaming for O Li Roon?

O LI ROON

Didn't I tell you, didn't I tell you, if you stole from me
Again Legba I was gon burn you, do something to you
Like they do 'cross the waters, in Kwait burn your booty
hair something
So you know damnit why don't you learn? So hard-headed!
COME HERE!

ELEGBA

Legba laughing.
Running ducking.
Get off me!

OYA

What you stealin for Legba!

ELEGBA

Went in his store told him I want some candy.
He say, "Gon and get the chocolate Legba it's right there."

OYA

So you took it?

ELEGBA

I say, "I ain't got no money nah."

O LI ROON

And I say, "Then you don't want no chocolate!"

ELEGBA

And I say, "That's a bold-faced lie bitch!"

OYA

Legba!

ELEGBA

I still want chocolate whether I got the money for it
Or not . . . I still want it. He gon talk bout . . .
Nigga tell him what you said you standing right there!

O LI ROON

Let me catch hold of him,
I won't turn him loose!
Lord swear!

OYA

O Li Roon don't argue with that boy.

O LI ROON

You know that ain't no boy
This lil motherfucker been here before!

ELEGBA

You the stupidest white man I done seen!
How I been here before and I'm standing in front of you!

If I been here, you been here too
And you ought to be smart enough to know better than to
test me!

O LI ROON

I ain't test you,
I say, "Lil Legba you don't want that
Candy man unless you got the money for it."

ELEGBA

And I shook for you.
Hell I stood on my hands to show
You . . . Emptied my pockets out and out onto the floor,
Let the lil balls of inside pocket fall out to
Demonstrate for yo half-cocked-eye ass
That I ain't had the money and wasn't gon get it soon
But that I was still salivating for that candy.
How you gon tell me what I want and don't want?
I can't stand fo nobody to tell me what I feel ain't
Really there . . . I said, "How much you wanna bet I want
that candy!"

O LI ROON

And I got wise to that shit
'Cause the last time you brought your black ass in my store.

AUNT ELEGUA

Hold on Li . . .

O LI ROON

Oh what he ain't black?
What yall catching breath 'cause I called him what he is
I was raised here too. Right on the Bayou.
Yo mama's beat my ass with you when you got in trouble . . .

His ass is black and mine is white
 His lying black ass talking about some, "I betcha a dollar I
 want that candy."
 I say, "I ain't betting."
 'Cause last time he took the candy and ate it through the
 wrapper, like he crazy.
 Talking bout, "See there, see how much I want it. That
 prove it. I eat it through the wrapper. Just like eating
 pussy. I eat it through the panties to get it."

OYA

Oya trying not to laugh
 You so nasty.

ELEGBA

Legba licks his lips.

O LI ROON

I made his lil ass get out my store talking like that nasty.
 That time I just made him leave the store. But here Legba
 again in my face talking about some candy. You the candy-
 talkingness punk I know! I said, "Go get the money for it."
 Here he go, "Oh okay," looking like a motherless child.
 Long-ass arms swinging sad like a sweet chariot. I started
 to give him the candy but then he gon snatch the goodie
 and run.

OYA

You left to run after fifty cents worth a candy?
 You got a whole store full of merchandise.

AUNT ELEGUA

And got a handful of hoodlums outside it.

OYA

You locked the door behind you Li?

ELEGBA

Hell nah . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

You gon be missing more than fifty cent
 You come back honey.

OYA

Here go your fifty cent Li go back to the store . . .

O LI ROON

You so sweet, so sweet. Looking after *this* Mischief,
 Caring for people around you. So good
 To Everybody Oya. Remember you
 Remember you watch my daughter, my
 Baby girl you remember?

OYA

Yeah Li I do.

O LI ROON

She remember you Oya. You only watch her
 One time but she always say to me, "Pa
 Li Roon when Ms. Mama Oya come watch
 Me again?" You believe that? She call you Ms.
 Mama Oya!

OYA

Huh.

Oya smiles.

Huh.

ELEGBA

You still owe me fifty cent.

O LI ROON

Oh I got the whole G-unit for you.
Li Roon jumps to get Legba.

OYA

Gon Li.

O LI ROON

O Li Roon exits.

AUNT ELEGUA

Who lil boy this is?

ELEGBA

Who big woman you is?

AUNT ELEGUA

All right now you got slick with the white man
I beat the snot out your ass and tell yo mama!
Elegua smiles.

I like him! He full of something. Like light . . .
You got pretty eyes boy. Who you leading
With them eyes? You gon be my husband
When you get grown. I promise you.

ELEGBA

You e'er break promises?

AUNT ELEGUA

Nope.

ELEGBA

I ain't neva growing up,
Yall be on suicide watch tomorrow.

AUNT ELEGUA

Oh he full of it . . .
Just life and mischief.
Sing us a song.

ELEGBA

This ain't no show!

AUNT ELEGUA

Oh nigga shut up and sing.
Shit you sit round here with all that mouth
Now somebody tell you to open it
And you shy between the teeth?
Get you ass over here sing for Aunt Ele . . .
Where did Darkness go?

OYA

Oh, he's gone like he do.

AUNT ELEGUA

Aw girl, don't worry make him miss something . . .
Go head, sing.

OYA

Yeah Legba, sing.

AUNT ELEGUA

What your name again baby?

ELEGBA

Mumblingsothatthefatladycan'thear me.

AUNT ELEGUA

Mouth!

That's what I'ma call you

Mouth.

Sing us song, Mouth!

ELEGBA

Legba smiles.

(Singing)

Lord she big

Lord see that!

Lord this lady, all woman

Born with her own rack of fat back

Lord she . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Elegua is not amused.

You funny baby. But I know your mama,

Who e'er she is would love for my fat ass to roll

Round there and say what?

ELEGBA

Mouth was stealing?

AUNT ELEGUA

I bet you she would have a song for you.

You better find some medley in all that mouth.

ELEGBA

I got a dream I could sing. :)

OYA

Dream?

AUNT ELEGUA

Excited!

C'mon Mouth woo me boy!

ELEGBA

A spell comes o'er Legba.

(Singing)

Hear Legba sing

Sing of her road

Hear Legba cry

Knowing her load.

Come down peace,

Come down night

Cover over Oya girl

Make her world all right.

AUNT ELEGUA

Ah hell nigga I thought

You was gon busta rhyme

Or something . . .

ELEGBA

Legba stares at Elegua.

AUNT ELEGUA

Gon head sing yo lil song.

Everybody wanna be an idol . . .

OYA

Oya's breath.

ELEGBA

(Singing)

She bleeds now,
Her wounds all close,
She breathes still
But her chest never rose.

Come down peace
Come down night
Cover over Oya girl
Make her world all right.

(He hums.)

SCENE / 10

THE MAN FROM STATE

The Man from State stands . . .

Oya girl . . .

OYA

Yes sir.

THE MAN FROM STATE

I am sorry Oya gal I really am I
Wished you would have come on when
I asked you to, I do. But you know
That's a good lesson on this life you

Never can tell what will happen to your
Chances you gotta jump when you can
Move, when you can move, you . . .
Young people like . . . like yourself don't have much
In the way of opportunity in this world . . .

OYA

Wait sir please . . .

THE MAN FROM STATE

I mean I would give you a chance I would
But the top girl we got she man oh man . . .
When you didn't come to us Oya gal
We had to get a second best; go there on
Our list. I don't like second nothing but such
Is life, like I told you chance to go, go, you know.
She found she was the second on our list, ooh wee.
Hell I didn't mince no words bout it I told her square
I say, "You our second. Gotta girl named Oya run
Like the wind. She say she coming on in a year."

OYA

Sir . . .

THE MAN FROM STATE

That girl found out she was our second, Oya and you would
Be surprised what people do to get to th' top some.
This here girl said to herself, I reckon, she show us good
and plenty.

That we wouldn't wanna look nowhere else when we
See what she can do. Took about seven off her time . . .
Just like that. Every time since she stepped on our grassy?
She been running for her life look like.

Seven consistent. Seven like that . . . and then more.
 I never seen nothing like it in m'life.
 Never.
 I do hope you keep training there Oya.
 And you know keep yourself up . . .
 But we just ain't got no place for you here.
 No, not here.

OYA

Oya sad, smiles.
 Taking it in.

(Elegba hums.)

SCENE 11

SHANGO

Enter Shango, dressed in an Army Recruit uniform.

(Elegba hums.)

OYA

What you come to tell me dressed like that?
 We . . . we through? That's what you saying?

SHANGO

OYA

Nothing to say? Huh.
 All the years I know'd you got mouth to say
 What come to it now what? Speechless?

(Elegba hums.)

OYA

Shango just speak your words and I'll be free.
 Free from you coming, tasting me at night,
 Me smelling you smelling like somebody else
 Yeah say it, un spell me Shango. Do me a favor.
 That's what you gon say right? That's what you doing me
 a . . .

SHANGO

Shango moves to . . .

OYA

No!

SHANGO

OYA

I ain't going to school no more . . .
 I, they ain't got no place for me.
 Nowhere for me to go but here, I'm here.
 I can't go nowhere. Just be here.
 Here.

SHANGO

Shango curls his fingers around Oya's ear
 And Caresses.

OYA

SHANGO

Exit Shango.

(*Elegba hums.*)

OYA

Oya's breath comes hard to her.

AUNT ELEGUA

They say she broke down . . .

SHUN

That's what they say.

MAMA MOJA

Or that she broke a spell.

SHUN

Broke something.

AUNT ELEGUA

Something happened.

ALL WOMEN

Something.

ELEGBA

(*Singing*)

Come down peace,
Come down night
Cover over Oya girl
Make her world all right.

Lil Legba exits like
A three-quarter moon in the morning.

(*Oya stares out.*)

SCENE 12

OGUN SIZE

Enter Ogun Size

I . . . I . . . know . . . I know that that you can he-hear me,

S So I'm I'm just standing here talking.

Standing h here speaking to you, my h heart.

Y . . . You don't know . . . You s-so blind

If you as-ask me.

I ain't n-never said nothing

Like that to you b-but how you think it make m me make me

. . . You ain't neva let me love you, but you gon lay down

And get closer to death? Snuggle up to him!

Death with his stale breath don't know you like I do.

He just a nasty ol man been looking at you since you was

Was a lil girl. But I been loving you always.

I been in love with your light and your sad eyes.

And I got this home inside me I know I do . . .

My outside seem like it's fragile but in here

A big man that will wrap you in love, Oya.

You come home with Ogun. Just come home.

You let me take care of you for a while.

I'll make it all right. I'll make it okay.

OYA

Oya stops her staring and looks at him.

You're not stuttering.

OGUN SIZE

What?

Laughing.

OYA

You not stuttering.

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

OGUN SIZE

How you feeling?
I should c-call somebody . . .

OYA

No!
Don't start again.
Don't start stuttering just talk to me.

OGUN SIZE

For the rest of my life.

OYA

OGUN SIZE

I won't skip another word. Another breath
Won't interrupt myself, you let me talk to you.
Oya in the air, Oya.
Let's go inside. We can talk quiet in there.
Come inside with me. We talk about starting
Something. Making a family one day . . .

OYA

Oya smiles.

(*The cast hums the opening.*
Ogun and Oya join them in the pantheon upstage.
Lights out.)

ACT 2

SCENE 1

Lights.
Shun and Nia dance downstage.
Oya sits on her porch.
Music plays.

SHUN AND NIA

(*Singing*)

Ah!
Ah!
Ah!

SHUN

A Party nearby!

NIA

Going loud!

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

SHUN

Music!

NIA

Dancing!

SHUN AND NIA

A baby shower!

Ah!

(Singing)

Hey!

OYA

Oya sitting on her porch,
Staring at the shower.
Look at Sophie dancing like that.
Look how big her belly is . . .
Lord.
Oya staring.
She must be so happy.

(The music changes.)

NIA

Ooh Girl!

SHUN

This is my song!

OYA

Oya on her porch.
I hate this song.

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size enters ready for work.

This a nice song.

Better than all that noise they've been playing all night.

OYA

It's too early to go to the car shop.

OGUN SIZE

The early bird catches the worm.

OYA

OGUN SIZE

Oya, don't sit here all night and morning.

OYA

I shouldn't let you walk out there
Make you go lay down.
So I can come in later listen to you snore.

OGUN SIZE

I don't snore.

OYA

You breathe hard.

OGUN SIZE

I breathe hard . . .

OYA

OGUN SIZE

You so sweet.

OYA

Gon Ogun.

OGUN SIZE

So sweet but you can't taste your sugar.
 Ogun kiss.
 I gotta go, gotta go.
 Ogun kiss.
 See you later.
 Ogun kiss.
 Bye baby.
 Kiss.

OYA

Don't be all up on me!

OGUN SIZE

See you later baby.

OYA

Music from the shower still going . . .

OGUN SIZE

We'll play good music at your shower one day.

OYA

One day.

OGUN SIZE

OYA

OGUN SIZE

Don't sit out there all night, Oya.

OYA

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size exits to work.

(The music from the party stops.)

ELEGBA

Legba sneaks in like the moon.

OYA

Oya bows her head.

ELEGBA

Legba hums.

OYA

Boy . . .
 Why you always sneaking?

ELEGBA

I'm not sneaking,
 I'm watching.

OYA

You getting too big to be doing that.
 Watching me. I know those looks . . .

ELEGBA

I can't do nothing with them.

OYA

People talk about those looks Legba.
 People talk bout you Legba.

ELEGBA

So you heard?

OYA

Who ain't heard about you getting kicked out,
Your mama putting you out?

ELEGBA

I'ma man now Oya.

OYA

Don't think she ain't gon take you back . . .

ELEGBA

She say don't be back for nine months.
Don't come back till it's born.

OYA

ELEGBA

OYA

Who? You got somebody pregnant?

ELEGBA

Legba beams like the moon.

OYA

Legba how old is that girl?
She my age?

ELEGBA

She ain't no girl.
Oba all woman.

OYA

You always did like older women.
What she doing messing with you?

ELEGBA

She say I got an old soul.
I say, "I'm just sixteen."
She say, "In this lifetime but you really like fifty."
I say, "Yeah right but when I lay you down
You will know why they say boys never stop
Playing with they toys."

OYA

Boy shut up!
Laughing!
So nasty!

ELEGBA

Never stop playing with they food either.
You know I can eat. I love some chocolate too . . .
The older it get, sugar just rise to the top . . .
Slurp.

OYA

See that woman right you
A dirty old man in there.

ELEGBA

OYA

ELEGBA
I can't stop being happy about this.

OYA

I can't stop smiling at you.

ELEGBA

We wrong Oya?
It ain't right to be just bringing babies in this world . . .

OYA

What else we got to do? Nothing. Sit around
Watch the world. Babies got some sunshine in em.
I saw some little bowlegged baby
Walk round here the other day just as cute
I looked at her and I said, "Whose baby is this? . . ."
She looked at me, "Not yours . . ." She wasn't mean
She just say it matter of fact and bent down
Picked one them firecrackers left from the Fourth
I say, "Lil baby don't eat that."
She put it right in her mouth and started chewing
Like it was this brand-new flavor Now and Later
Just chewing and the burnt orange of the gunpowder
Flowing out her mouth . . . she just smiling.
Her mama walk by and grab up the baby,
"What the fuck you got in your mouth?"
Starting spanking her.
"Didn't I tell you to not put shit in your mouth . . ."
The baby start crying. She carrying the baby away looking at
Me talking bout, "And you just gon sit here and let her kill
herself?"
I wanted to be like, "Bitch that ain't my baby
She just told me I wasn't her mama . . ."
Why she let the baby just roam around the projects
Any damn way? As much as they shoot round here?
Letting your child just walking around here. Unchecked!

ELEGBA

Legba looks at Oya girl.

OYA

Oya girl feels him staring.
Go in there and get some sleep.
Look like you been up all night.

ELEGBA

Ogun . . .

OYA

He gone to work . . .
You need to sleep gon head . . . Daddy.

ELEGBA

Thank you Oya.

OYA

Uh-huh.

ELEGBA

Legba sneaks off like the moon behind a cloud
Gone but still there.

(Legba hums.)

SHANGO

Enter Shango dressed in Army Fatigues . . .

OYA

Oya's breath.

SHANGO

Shango stands in a better light.

OYA

A sad song plays . . .

SHANGO

Sad like when you were little.

OYA

Sad like a mother's heartbreak.

SHANGO AND OYA

Sad . . .

SHANGO

I saw Legba go in.

What he doing here?

OYA

Minding his business . . .

SHANGO

That lil boy got business over here?

OYA

He ain't that little no more.

He about to be a daddy.

SHANGO

I been gone that long huh?

OYA

Long enough.

SHANGO

Surprised you ain't swollen up.

You with somebody I know.

OYA

If you know why you asking?

SHANGO

Who you been down together in

Your sleep with?

OYA

How all of this your business, huh?

Didn't you just get here?

Say your hellos to everybody,

They will tell you all

The news you wanna know.

I'm not your reporter, seek your

Prophecy elsewhere.

SHANGO

You ought to be swollen, belly full,

Glowing with that morning glow . . .

Titties perky ready to give life . . .

OYA

I ain't trying to have no youngins making me grown.

Remember that? Please boy. Gon, okay?

Gon Shango.

SHANGO

Shango curls his fingers . . . He Caresses . . .

You still slim and ripe . . .

How somebody ain't put
 A baby inside you yet is beyond me.
 Exit Shango.

SCENE 2

OYA

Oya
 Laughs to herself.

AUNT ELEGUA

Aunt Ele sees it,
 How could she not?
 Ooh Oya gal Oya gal!
 Where you coming from smiling like that?
 Tell me I love women's secrets!

OYA

I just came back from . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

He home ain't he?
 Shango!
 He home from the war or
 The crisis . . . whatever . . .
 Your Fire is back!
 Girl you better go get melted down!

OYA

Shhh! Aunt Ele, I'm with Ogun . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Yeah but he don't walk near you and
 Your temperature change. I have seen you.
 I know what you're like under Ogun Size.
 But it ain't nothing like that lightning
 From Shango, eh?

OYA

Aunt Ele!

AUNT ELEGUA

Shango come and he walk over to you
 Your knees clap down, you fall
 On that bed, honey that muscle just
 Grinding on his thigh aching to touch . . .
 You start to change color you start
 To lose your breath, how they say
(Singing)

Huh-huh can you keep up? . . .

OYA

Your nephew loves me . . .
 I love him . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Something bout that say "lie" to me.
 I got to go, I just come thought I be nosy
 Come see if you nosy.
 Come see if your nose wide open.

SCENE 3

From offstage, the cast hums a gospel or spiritual.

OYA

Sunday afternoon.

Oya sitting on her porch.

NIA

Nia and Shun walk by.

SHUN

Laughing to themselves.

NIA

There go the girl, Shun, almost let Shaunta
Kill herself by eating a fireworks. Yeah!
Remember I told you.

SHUN

Oya Jean Fair almost let my godbaby die, Nia?

OYA

I told her not to.

She's got a grown lil mouth.

SHUN

You should have popped her hand or something.
You grown ain't you?

NIA

Now you know I would have come round
Here and beat Oya ass she would have hit
My baby.

SHUN
Laughing . . .

NIA

What?

SHUN

I could just see Shaunta telling
Oya, "You ain't my mama!"

NIA

Laughing too!

Yeah!

To Oya

She so bad sometimes . . .

SHUN

Ooh I love her.

OYA

If she was my baby . . .

SHUN

She ain't your baby you
Ain't got no baby.
Don't run out with your mouth.
Tend to your lil grease monkey.

NIA

Don't act like that Shun.

Nia and Shun leave.

SHUN

Laughing.

(The cast upstage hums.)

SHANGO

Enter Shango.
You weren't at church.
How long it's been since you talk to Jesus?

OYA

Don't do that.

SHANGO

I'm just concerned about your soul . . .
I wanna see you in the sky when we
All get there.

OYA

Service still going why you left?

SHANGO

Ah hell I had to get outta there.
It's going on four!
First they started late, then the choir . . .

OYA

Legba was up there?

SHANGO

I saw him . . .
Him and Ogun's brother, Oshoosi.
If I was Ogun I would ship Oshoosi ass
Off to military school . . .
Thirteen years old, getting thrown in jail.

OYA

Oya looks up.

SHANGO

Yeah, that's why the church going so long.
They praying for his monkey ass.
Choir just up there singing.
Elegua came in to the church she mad
As hell. You can tell 'cause her wig all
Tilted to the side and she walking that
Big girl walk towards the altar. She
Talk to the secretary of the mother's board, Mother Pickalo.
Whatever Elegua telling her making her shake and put
down her head.

She starts praying. I'm like, "What the hell's going on?"
Elegua walk up to the choirstand and she just
Start to beating on Oshoosi. Beat beat beat . . .
All the way down the aisle of the church and out
The front door. Mother Pickalo, she stands up like she bout
to declare war.

She standing there you know in the church lady stance
You know with her face fully forward Holy Ghost filled,
Double chin jangling. Gon talk about, "Giving honor to
God, yall

I have some news, you know times is hard.
And the devil is out there I know!" People "Amen-ing" and
"Yes Lordin."

I'm like I wish this chick would come the hell on
And stop the testimony . . . But you know she crying:
"And Lord the devil can sometimes sneak in here
Too . . . This holy sanctuary, Lordie G Lord!
This temple . . . this house of God can be sacked with
wasteful . . .

There was money being stolen from
 Out the mouth of God and being used
 To play in some corner crap game
 Filled with wicked youthful derision. Lord God Lord God.
 I ask that this money be prayed over and
 Put back into the rightful hands of the church
 So it can pay for the pastor's sons' gonorrhea of the mouth!"

OYA

She didn't say that!

SHANGO

How you know you wasn't there?

OYA

Elegua came and told me she put Oshoosi in jail for a day ...

SHANGO

So you knew this whole time, huh?
 What you let me tell it for?

OYA

Wanted you to tell me something.

SHANGO

He smiles.

OYA

She smiles ...

SHANGO AND OYA

They ...

SHANGO

Shango curls . . . He Caresses . . .

ELEGBA

Legba sneaks in unseen. A bundle in his arms . . .

OYA

Oya smiles.

SHANGO

You tell me something,
 What you doing with Ogun Size?

OYA

The same thing I was doing with you . . .

SHANGO

He doing it right?

OYA

Lying.
 Every night.

SHANGO

Like me? Nah not like me.
 He eat that pussy like me?

OYA

You oversteppin Shango!

SHANGO

How you mean, I was there first . . .

OGUN SIZE

Where you at now Shango?
Enter Ogun Size.

SHANGO

Shango grins . . . A glint of war in his eyes.
Hi, hi, you doing Ogun . . .

OGUN SIZE

Oh I'm phyne . . .
You know . . .
Ogun laughs in mimic of Shango.
I'm fine.

OYA

Oya interrupting
Gon Shango.

SHANGO

Smiling
I was there first . . .
I'll be there last.
Exit Shango.

OYA

OGUN SIZE

OYA

OGUN SIZE

ELEGBA

A baby cries inside.

OYA

You hear a baby crying?

OGUN SIZE

Yeah.

OYA

They move to the door . . .

OGUN SIZE

You wanna go in now?

OYA

Gon Ogun . . .

OGUN SIZE

You stay outside too much Oya.
You need stay in sometimes.
It ain't right for you to be out here all the time.
One day you'll have something to stay in for.

OYA

Let me see what's in my house.

OGUN SIZE

You should already know.
You know?
You should know already.

SCENE 4

Shun and Nia stand and hang clothes on a line.

SHUN

Hum.

NIA

Huh?

SHUN

Hum, so nobody can hear.

(*Nia hums.*)

SHUN

Sharing a secret.
Girl Legba mama came round to Oya house
Screaming and carrying on!

NIA

Laughing,
Back to humming.

(*Nia hums.*)

SHUN

Yeah girl! 'Cause Legba done
Took his baby and been hiding
Out at Oya House.

NIA

So his mama got the baby now?

SHUN

You supposed to be humming?
I'm supposed to be telling!

NIA

Nia hums.

(*Nia hums.*)

SHUN

So yeah Legba mama got the baby now,
And she told Legba to stay at Oya house.

(*Nia hums.*)

SHUN

Oya got a full house,
'Cause now Ogun ask
Elegua to stay round there!

NIA

What?

SHUN

Yeah girl!

NIA

Nia hums.

(*Nia hums.*)

SHUN

The night before Ogun woke up and
Saw Oya sitting on the porch rocking . . . You

Remember it was during the blackout
 All the power was out in the projects.
 Anybody in they right mind be inside
 Not sitting on they porch but Oya
 Say he don't know seem like she losing her mind
 Ask Aunt Ele come and watch her.
 But I know the bitch ain't crazy nah
 She a lil hotbox and she been getting a visitor.

NIA

Who?

(Nia hums.)

NIA

Shango!

(Nia hums.)

NIA

But you knew that was coming
 I know you ain't mad?

SHUN

What you talking bout Nia!
 I ought punch you in your damn face!

NIA

Ah bitch you jealous you ain't crazy, huh.

SHUN

Huh.

NIA

Consoling her friend.
 They was together before he left.

SHUN

I don't care if they was *married* before she stealing
 My man now.

NIA

You know Shango ain't nobody man.

SHUN

Yet . . . You just got to learn how to tether niggas.
 Just sing your song Nia.
 Don't worry bout Shun okay
 'Cause when it come to it . . .
 I know how to run Miss Oya
 Where she can't walk.

NIA

Nia smiles at her friend.
 She hums.

(Nia hums.)

SCENE 5

OGUN SIZE

Why you let her go?

AUNT ELEGUA

She grown and got legs
 And I asked her to go . . .

And further who you think you talking to boy?
I ain't got to splain hell of nothing to you!

OGUN SIZE

Aunt Ele I don't wanna get into it . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

But you step yo flat foot right in it!

OGUN SIZE

Oya ain't feeling good!

AUNT ELEGUA

Who you to say that girl ain't feeling good?
She a grown woman ain't she?
Grown enough to know what is and ain't.

OGUN SIZE

She sitting out, sneaking out all the time.
Staring got this look on her face.
She got a sad look on her always . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Hell life like that . . .
You think sadness stop niggas
From going to the fish market?

OYA

Oya enters . . .

OGUN SIZE

Smiling . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

Carrying a bag.

OGUN SIZE

Let me get that for you.
Where you been?

OYA

Now wait . . . you just took the bag from me.
Where it look like I been?

OGUN SIZE

Did you leave outta here carrying that grin?
Where you pick that up from?

OYA

Oya stops smiling
Nowhere.

OGUN SIZE

I'm serious . . . I ain't seen your face like that in a long time . . .
No round me.
I just wanna see it . . . I . . .
I love it . . .
I love you.

OYA

I gotta help with the fish.

OGUN SIZE

You know I don't eat fish . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

It's Friday boy . . .
Friday the best day for some fish. I never
Did understand my sister's kids. Some of
The most finicky eaters. You won't eat fish . . .

That Oshoosi talking bout he can't have no
 Banana pudding 'cause it make his throat itch.
 On top of that neither one of the niggas take in
 Milks without farting all over the house. Never
 Understood how yall get these delicate stomachs
 When you starving . . . seem like to me yo stomach
 Be glad to get anything in it. C'mon stay
 For some of this fish. You don't eat enough nohow.

OGUN SIZE

Should I stay Oya?

OYA

Go on in and lay down fore we eat.

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size exits hoping to see her smile . . .
 But only finds a dark cloud in Oya's sky.

OYA

Oya looks to Elegua

AUNT ELEGUA

I'll start the seasoning . . .
 Aunt Elegua exits.

OYA

Oya bows her head.

ELEGBA

Legba tries to sneak in the door with the baby.

OYA

Legba yo mama say you can't keep the baby round here you
 want her to come here and be mad with all of us.

ELEGBA

Legba smiles at Oya.
 Oya like his sister, Oya.
 He brings the baby to her.
 Eh Oya look here.
 He shows her . . .
 Straight line of little black marks
 On his leg. See?
 Laughing . . .
 Like the Lord was trying to send a message on it.
 See it . . .

OYA

Huh . . .

ELEGBA

Hold him . . .
 Legba stands back and pulls down his pants . . .

OYA

What you doin?

ELEGBA

Legba proudly shows Oya his right thigh.
 Same marks. The ones like nobody ever seen
 Right here on me and my baby.
 You ever know something yours,
 And from nowhere it proves
 Itself, shows it self to be just yours only . . .
 You ever felt that, Oya?
 Something all yours. This mine.

OYA

Oya stares.

ELEGBA

When I hold him . . .
 It's like I got more love in my hands
 Than the world got air to breathe.
 I don't want nothing to keep me from it.

OYA

ELEGBA

I know you understand me.
 Anybody understands me you do.

OYA

Sighs.
 Oya gives Legba back "more love than the world got air . . ."
 Oya in the air Oya . . .
 Go inside Legba.

ELEGBA

Legba fades into the house
 Like the moon in the shadow of the world.

OYA

Oya breaks her spell.
 That's why you named that damn baby Marc!
 You fool!

ELEGBA

Legba laughs . . .
 Fades into the house.

OYA

Oya smiles to herself.
 Marc. Huh.

Night.
(Singing)

Come down peace . . .
 Come down night . . .

SHANGO

Enter Shango dressed in his Army Fatigues.
 Just came to say Good-bye.

OYA

All the nights I've been seeing you
 And you just telling me now you leaving?

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size enters.

SHANGO

I come to return the reins my man.

OYA

SHANGO

I gotta go.
 Oya keep your head up.
 I tried to leave you a lil present but . . .
 I gotta go.
 Ogun you stay strong man.
 Keep your lil family together.
 Exit Shango.

OYA

Oya curls her fingers behind her ears . . . she Caresses the soft.

(Oya hums.)

SCENE 6

OYA

Oya in the early evening
 Standing on someone else's porch.
 She wants to knock on the door but . . .
 She hums.

(*Oya hums.*)

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

Don't sing on my doorstep.
 A woman of magic, a bruja,
 A hoodoo-voodoo lady walks
 To the porch.

OYA

I got,
 My body empty . . .

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

What you want me to do about it?

OYA

Please,
 I know you know how to fix it.

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

Go to the church ladies that's what they there
 For, they all stand over you moaning and praying
 They fix you right up.

OYA

They won't even see I'm in trouble.
 They all say you young and you ain't pregnant?

Praise da Lord, bless
 The Lord o my soul . . .

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

God is good . . .

OYA

But He is good in all things.

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

Huh. The Good God of a thousand and one pieces.
 You looking for your piece?

OYA

You got something, some words,
 That make me love right, love where I should.

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

If you ask God of a thousand and one he will provide you
 Be careful how you ask it though.
 He gives you paths, none of them easy.

OYA

Then I want my own mark.
 I wanna look down and see myself
 Mirrored back to me.

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

You should have had that by now.

OYA

What?

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

You don't think by now you should have
Had something growing inside you?

OYA

No... No. I mean not if it wasn't time. Not if it wasn't...

No!

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

But a grown woman Oya gal?
You been grown for a long time now
How you think it just skipped you?
You ain't been with no little boys.
You had how many, two grown men
From two sides of the world, the fighter
And the businessman. Both grown men
And not nar one of em filled you with seed
That growed into something? You still walking
Round here wishing for that? You should know by now...

OYA

What I should know?

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

If you ain't got it in your mind I sure as shit ain't gon put it
there.

OYA

Put something here!

THE WOMAN WHO REMINDS YOU

I'ma woman, I can't put nothing there.
The hoodoo bruja goes off her porch.

(Shift.)

OYA

Oya turns. Men begin to gather.

O LI ROON

Like a rain cloud.

OGUN SIZE

You may not know...

SHANGO

But just like in the middle of the desert

O LI ROON

Out of nowhere comes torrential rain...

EGUNGUN

Around here sometimes out of nowhere...

ALL

A party.

SHANGO

The speakers get set up on one block...

OGUN SIZE

The music comes fumbling down the street

EGUNGUN

Calling you out your name.

SHANGO

It's that bass drop...

OLI ROON

So hard, thumping.

EGUNGUN

Dum da da, dum da da!

OGUN SIZE

It calls late, as soon as the sun downs

EGUNGUN

And again out of nowhere . . .

ALL

A crowd . . .

EGUNGUN

The Egungun assumes the position.
DJing and spinning tha hottest earth
Thumping melodies invoking sex and
Heat.

Goddamn look at the girl in the green!

SHUN

Shun . . .

NIA

And Nia.

SHUN

Walk in.

NIA

In their best public,
Yet intimate apparel.

SHUN

They walk through.

SHANGO

The men stare!

SHUN

How could they not?

EGUNGUN

Damn girl in the green came ready to ride
For real shawty what's real? Oh she acting
All stank, that's all right you be begging me
To be your baby daddy later girl.

SHUN

You better watch you mouth boi!

EGUNGUN

Aight lil mama I ain't trying to fight
Not tonight it's too thick and tight
Out here. Yall ready for that next
One? He plays a song with ride
In its rhythm, making you wanna grind where
You are.

That's it yall get to that spot
Where it's real hot. I'ma keep
Turning the temperature up
Yall just keep riding out
Specially you lil red in the green
You thick as fuck!

OYA

Oya hears that beat!

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER

SHUN

How could she not?

OYA

She stands and watches.

EGUNGUN

It's that time of night where
Everyone in the out over here
Needs to get to know that freak within.
You know what 'm talking, specially
For the fellas. Come on yall I got a hundred
Dollars for that freshest freak girl out there.

NIA

Teasing her friend.
Go head girl.

SHUN

You done lost your mind!

NIA

That's a hundred dollars.
They say you a freak . . .

SHUN

You do it, Nia!

NIA

Ain't nobody wanna see my stretchmarks.

SHUN

Well I can't in my condition . . .

EGUNGUN

A hundred dollars for that nasty girl!
The one who get up here and show us all the world.
C'mon lil mama do your thang mommy.
Get up here on this speakerbox.
We want to see the way you move.
Yall scared? Why you acting shy?
After this here next song though we gon touch the sky.

ELEGBA

Enter Legba beaming like a full moon,
Bright in all white.
He moves to Oya.

OYA

Legba . . .

ELEGBA

Oya, what you doing here?

OYA

I just came to see . . .

ELEGBA

You sure . . . just to see?

OYA

Legba where the baby?

ELEGBA

My mama got him.

EGUNGUN

Appears the Egungun.
Eh my man Legba!

ELEGBA

They pull close.

EGUNGUN

Too close to be just friends.

ELEGBA AND EGUNGUN

Just friends.

OYA

Oya sees it how could she not.

EGUNGUN

The Egungun sees Oya.

This your friend?

ELEGBA

Yeah she is.

EGUNGUN

You told her about me, your friend?

She know we friends?

She wanna be friends with us?

ELEGBA

Smiling like the light of the night.

Ask her.

EGUNGUN

How you doin ...

Oya?

ELEGBA

Yeah.

OYA

I'm all right.

EGUNGUN

You pretty ...
Everybody tell you that though,
I know they do.

OYA

You ... you got any kids?

EGUNGUN

Nah, nah, not yet though.
No.

OYA

Oya moves to ...

EGUNGUN

Don't go. Let me play this song.
I'll be back ... for both of you.

OYA

Legba ...

ELEGBA

He will if you wait.
We can go with him ...
You been looking, right? You came to see.
Maybe this what you looking for ...
Maybe this fix whats broke ...

OYA

Oya walking back.
Turns.

AUNT ELEGUA

Running into the dancing Aunt Elegua!
 UH-HUH! THAT'S MY JAM MR. DJ!
 Shake that goodness hey! Like Taffy Laffy!
 Work it out! That's what I mean,
 Dancing a "too old to be acting this young" dance!
 I just cuts it loose yall, yeah I do, I get it out!
 Ooh yeah honey!

OYA

Laughing how could she not!

AUNT ELEGUA

What you gon stay here all night Oya!
 Girl you betta c'mon and dance it out.
 C'mon real hard so you get your system
 Cleaned. Work it like this!

OYA

Oya dances like Elegua.

AUNT ELEGUA

Nah gal it's like this here.
 Aunt Elegua gets down with
 Her big old self backing that
 Thang up! Uh-huh!
 That's how you do that.

OYA

Laughing ...
 A cloud passes.
 I don't feel good Aunt Ele...
 You come to get me?

AUNT ELEGUA

Came to show you a way home.

SCENE 7

OYA

Oya girl sitting on the front porch
 Humming and then crying. Smiling.
 Then humming again.

SCENE 8

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size enters.
 Oya.

OYA

You don't need to be there.

OGUN SIZE

Oya you just hurt.

OYA

You don't know ...

OGUN SIZE

Please let's go in ...
 I'll take care of you.

OYA

I don't need you to take care of me.

OGUN SIZE

Oya one day we ...

OYA

No! No more days! None!

What you got?

You gon be stuck here like me forever.

Just us so what you got?

What I need you to do for me?

Gon head Ogun

Gon head ...

OGUN SIZE

Ogun turns.

OYA

You was good to me ...

OGUN SIZE

Ogun begins to turn back.

OYA

Don't turn around!

You was good to me,

And I loved you.

Go find somebody who love you better.

Don't ... turn.

Gon head now ...

Gon head.

OGUN SIZE

Ogun Size leaves his heart behind.

OYA

Legba enters like the moon during the day, there but not
saying anything.

Legba, Legba, Legba!

You surprised me!

ELEGBA

OYA

I didn't know you was like that!

I didn't know you was into things like that.

I mean I know you got a lil freak in you ...

ELEGBA

Legba smiles.

OYA

Legba.

You a gray boy?

ELEGBA

I got a son.

OYA

Gray boys have sons.

ELEGBA

I came to tell you ...

OYA

Don't ...

I don't feel ...

ELEGBA

Shango is home.

OYA

Oya curls . . .

ELEGBA

He coming here I saw him.
He stopped by Ogun and shook his hand first.
Say he sorry how he acted before.
Say now that he grown . . . He need to say his sorrys.

OYA

Huh.

ELEGBA

I dream about you Oya.

OYA

Gon now Legba.

ELEGBA

It's always been the same . . .

OYA

Gon!

ELEGBA

Elegba walks away, staring at Oya.

OYA

Shun and Nia enter to give me more bad news.

SHUN

Don't . . .
No, now!

NIA

C'mon on now Shun be a good neighbor!

SHUN

Fuck that . . . Fuck that!
Under her breath:
I don't like that . . . I don't see why
I have to . . .
She crazy anyway!

NIA

Go on girl stop being like that.
To Oya:
Hey!

OYA

Hey!

SHUN

NIA

Shun!

SHUN

Ah shit!
I guess you've heard . . .

OYA

I know Shango back.

SHUN

Yeah I guess you would know that.
But you heard about me?
Me and Shango?

OYA

You and Shango what?

SHUN

You better act like you happy for me
Looking all sad n shit . . .
You better know.

OYA

Happy for what?

SHUN

Smile.

NIA

Shun got Shango's baby.

SHUN

I'm having his baby
So I'm his woman now!
You ain't shit to him.

NIA

Shun!

SHUN

Heavy breath!
But I was gon come to
Invite you to the shower we having,
If you can make it. See I said it les go.

OYA

Thank you . . .
I don't think I'll be there.

SHUN

Good . . .
I mean yeah . . .
Come on Nia.

OYA

Oya's breath comes loose . . .

SHUN

You all right?

OYA

Yeah I just gotta go inside
I gotta get a gift for Shango.

SHUN

Where my gift?

OYA

You already got it.

NIA

Come on Shun.

OYA

Oya with light in her eyes
Enters her house.

NIA

Nia and Shun leave.
Shango enters.

SHUN

OYA

SHANGO

He stands in his officer's uniform.

OYA

(Offstage)

You out there now Shango!
I know you are . . .
I be there in a minute!

SHANGO

Good to see you Oya gal.
Take your time . . .

OYA

I know you a busy man now
I heard your good news,
I heard your good news!
So I said let me get him something,
A present so he remembers me in his new life and times!

SHANGO

You didn't have to do that.

OYA

Yes I did . . .
I have to do it.

ELEGBA

Legba enters like the moon eclipsing the sun.
(Singing)

She sleep now
But her eyes still open

Yes sleep now
But her tears still flowin.

OYA

Oya enters
Holding her hand to her head.

SHANGO

Shango moves to curl his fingers.

OYA

But Oya's hand . . .

SHANGO

Holding her head . . .

OYA

Is blocking him.

ELEGBA

(Singing)

Come down peace
Come down night
Cover over Oya girl
Make her world all right.

OYA

In the other hand, her left . . .
Oya gives it to Shango.
I do this in remembrance of you . . .
I wished I could make a part of me
To give you but I had to take what's

Already there . . . Just give you what I got.
Oya bleeds, down her right hand.

ELEGBA

(Singing)

She bleeds now

SHANGO

You . . .

OYA

Open it . . .

ELEGBA

(Singing)

Her wounds all close

SHANGO

Shango opens his hand . . .

ELEGBA

(Singing)

She breathes still

OYA

Oya moves her hand from where her ear used to be . . .

ELEGBA

(Singing)

But her belly never rose . . .

OYA

For you to remember me by . . .

(Oya collapses down.)

ELEGBA

(Singing)

Come down peace now
Come down night
Cover over Oya girl
Make her world all right.

AUNT ELEGUA

Say that's her mark.

SHUN

Say he left her there bleeding.

OYA

A breeze over Oya.

SHUN

Somebody called her crazy so and so . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

She wasn't crazy.

MAMA MOJA

Just sad.

ALL WOMEN

Huh.

OYA

Oya . . . Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA

Say she sitting up somewhere . . .

OYA

Oya . . .

MAMA MOJA

Staring at the ceiling

EPILOGUE

All save Oya stand. The men hum that sweet sad hum. Oya is center stage holding her head.

AUNT ELEGUA

I don't know about all that . . .

SHUN

Me neither

NIA

No one does . . .

OYA

Oya . . .

MAMA MOJA

Say She cut it off . . .

OYA

Oya girl . . .

SHUN

On her back like a lake of brown . . .

AUNT ELEGUA, MAMA MOJA AND SHUN

Staring . . .

ALL WOMEN

Huh.

MAMA MOJA

My Lord.

OYA

In the air . . . Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA

Holding her head staring at the sky
 You look at her,
 Aunt Elegua looks to Oya,
 Look like she floating somewhere . . .

OYA

In the air . . .

SHUN

Oya Jean Fair . . .

AUNT ELEGUA

My girl Oya.

MAMA MOJA

Sweet sad Oya.

AUNT ELEGUA, MAMA MOJA AND SHUN

Beautiful girl.

(*Oya lets out sharp breath.*)

OYA

Ah!

(*Blackout.*)

END OF PLAY