

Ma Binu!

by Feyintoluwa Ekisola

Description

Ma Binu! is a story about a young Nigerian girl lost in own imagination. It takes place in Ekiti, Nigeria in 2006 and is based off of the unrelenting loss I felt when I was betrayed by my father. Turns out the truth (ooto) was right under my nose.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS*Real World Characters*

RETI	20. Lost in her own nightmare.
AGBEBI	Late 20's/early 30's. Reti's Nurse. She practices modern medicine, but still believes in the matters that effect the heart.
TAIWO	16. The older twin. Spoiled, self serving, and unwilling to accept change.
KENNY	16. The younger twin. A self-reliant hometown girl who always looks for the positive in any situation.
JACK	65. Reti's father. Abandoned Reti and her mother, Ope, when she was born.

Dreamers

RETI	Reti means Hope.
IFE	Ife means Love. She is the eldest of the dreamers who journey to Ooto. She carries a Gangan that connect her with the spirits of the forest.
BINU	Binu means Anger. She is the last born of the dreamers. A ticking time bomb ready to go off at a moment's notice. A Port Harcourt gal.
BERU	Beru means Fear. She puts up a brave front in spite of her hesitancy. Hausa.
OOTO	Ooto means Truth. He is the light in the middle of the Reti's dark forest.

OPE	53. Jack's first wife. Reti's mom.
JENNY	49. Jack's second wife. Mother of the twins.
SAD CLOWN	Sad Clown lives at a carnival in the center ring of the forest. They are always accompanied by two shadow figures and their emotions are strongly effected by the presence of the moon.
THE DOG	Reti's best friend. A stray dog who takes on a darker form in the forest.
2 SHADOWS	One male, one female. They give off the vibe of overbearing parents.

****NOTE ABOUT THE CHARACTER:**

The five doubled roles are RETI/RETI, AGBEBI/IFE, TAIWO/BINU, KENNY/BERU, and JACK/OOTO.

Each character can take on aspects of the other in certain situations. For example, Kenny may put up a brave front by searching for the positive in any situation.

Scene Breakdown

ACT 1

Prologue	<i>OPE's compound</i>
Scene 1	<i>Orire Hospital, Ado Ekiti</i>
Scene II	<i>Orire Hospital, Ado Ekiti/Madison, Wisconsin</i>
Scene III	<i>The Dark Forest</i>
Scene IV	<i>Orire Hospital</i>
Scene V	<i>Beru's Meadow, The Dark Forest</i>
Scene VI	<i>Orire Hospital</i>
Scene VII	<i>The Dark Forest, Inside a cavern</i>
Scene VIII	<i>Sad Clown's Carnival The Dark Forest</i>

ACT 2

Scene I	<i>Orire Hospital</i>
Scene II	<i>Orire Hospital</i>
Scene III	<i>Ooto's Village, The Dark Forest</i>
Scene IV	<i>Ooto's Village</i>
Scene V	<i>Orire Hospital</i>
Epilogue	<i>Here and now</i>

SETTING

The majority of the play is set in Orire Hospital, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. The dream world is set in the surrounding forest.

TIME

December 2006 - January 2007.

PROLOGUE

TRACK:1

(Midnight. The full moon beams over a small compound in Ijurin, Nigeria. Once in a while a chicken may cluck or a goat may cry, but all else is quiet. The air is dry and smells like a combination of burnt rubber and human waste. October 21st, 1975.

(Lights up on OPE who lays on a mat with her eyes wide open. Beside her wrapped in swaddling clothes is her one year old daughter, Reti. Reti wakes up and begins to cry.)

TRACK:2

OPE

Ah ah.

(She picks up the child.)

What's wrong ifemi **i-feh-me** (**my love**)? You can't sleep?

(The baby continues to cry. OPE pulls out her breast and places her nipple into the baby's mouth, but the child, too distressed to notice, bites down hard on OPE's nipple.)

Ye **yay** (**Ow!**)!

(She cringes in pain. Tears well up in her eyes.)

Don't be angry at me, eh **ehh** (**okay?**) ?

(She bounces the child and sings an old nursery rhyme.)

There is fire on the mountain,
Run, run, run. There is fire on the mountain, run, run,
run.

(The child's cries grow louder and OPE growls in frustration. Both mother and child are crying at this point.)

Please, Reti ray-tea, go to sleep. What do you want?
Oh, God. What can I do? Do you want your doggy?

(The child's cries quiet for a moment. OPE moves to a large chest positioned in the downstage left corner. She opens it and pulls out a small stuffed dog.)

Your daddy left this for you. See? It still smells like him.

(She is about to hand Reti the stuffed animal when she notices a zipper on the dog's belly. She reaches inside the dog and finds a note. Reti continues to whimper.)

JACK

"Reti, never forget your father loves you. There is always a place for you in America if you choose to come. Call me when you are ready. Ma binu."

(There is a number on the back of his note. OPE stares at the note, crumples it up and throws it in the trash. She thinks for a moment, digs it out of the trash and tucks it in her bra.)

TRACK:3

OPE

Reti, Stop crying! I told you, your father is gone and he will not return, so enough!

(OPE snatches the dog away from RETI.
RETI is quiet. OPE crawls back onto the
mat and faces away from her child
towards the audience. Vehemently, as a
warning, she snares:)

There is fire on the mountain, Jack. Run, run, run.

TRACK:4

TRANSITION - MUSIC: ASA'S
FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

ACT [I]

SCENE [I]

TRACK:5

ADO EKITI, NOVEMBER 22, 2006.

(Upstage center, on a raised platform, is a hospital bed with a heart monitor and oxygen machine nearby. On the platform are two chairs for hospital guests and a table for the nurse. Behind the bed is a wall facade. Upstage left is a door that leads to the hospital lobby. Downstage is an open playing area where the majority of Reti's dreams take place. Ideally, the hospital disappears when the action changes over to the dream world, but the hospital bed must be lit in a moon-like hue.)

CARNIVAL MUSIC.

(RETI, now 20 years old, hides underneath the hospital bed drenched with sweat and breathing heavily. After not too long, a red nose clown in colorful clothing walks confidently on stage with a machete in hand. The clown stops, sniffs the air, and listens for a whole minute before giving up its search. Displeased with losing its prey it exits stage right. RETI scrambles into the hospital bed and pulls the covers over her head

just as the SAD CLOWN reenters.
The clown struggles to drag a
giant moon on stage and attach it
to a lift. As the moon rises the
stage is covered with the shadows
of tall trees as if a forest is
rising with the moons ascension.
Welcome to the dark forest.)

SAD CLOWN

(Giggling) There is fire on the mountain. Run, run,
run!

(SAD CLOWN runs towards the hospital
bed.)

TRANSITION - LIGHT CHANGE

SCENE [II]

MORNING. ADO EKITI, NIGERIA.

TRACK:6

(The day after Thanksgiving. RETI lies unresponsive in the hospital bed. Her heart monitor beeps evenly and an oxygen mask has been placed over her face. OPE enters digging in her purse, she's looking for something. She stops in the door frame with a look of anguish on her face.)

OPE

Ifemi ee-feh-mi (my love). Reti ray-tea?

(She goes to Reti's hospital bed and gives her a kiss before sitting in the visitors chairs upstage right. From her purse, OPE pulls out RETI's childhood play toy, the stuffed dog. It has become dirty and tattered over time. OPE unzips the belly of the dog and pulls out a piece of paper within. Taking a deep breath OPE reaches in her purse for a calling card and her cell phone.)

OPE

Oh, God.

(OPE dials the number on the note and the phone begins to ring.)

TRACK:8

(Downstage left, JENNY Dapo steps into the spotlight; we are now in Madison, Wisconsin. As JENNY steps on stage the muffled sounds of a Thanksgiving dinner can be heard in the house behind her,

offstage left. JENNY has stepped into the home office to answer JACK's phone. He's never changed his number.)

JENNY

Hello! This is Jack's wife speaking!

TRACK:6

OPE

Hello?

JENNY

Yes! This is Jenny Dapo.

OPE

Hello, I would like to speak with ehm... Jack. Jack Dapo.

JENNY

Okay, and who may I ask is speaking?

OPE

My name is ehm... Tell him it is an old friend from Ado-Ekiti ah-doe aye-key-tea, Nigeria.

JENNY

Oh! Of course! Ekabo eh-kah-buh (welcome)!

(JENNY, unknowingly, says the wrong Yoruba greeting, but she feels pleased with herself for speaking her husband's language.)

One moment please!

(OPE looks at her phone in disbelief. She gets up from the hospital's visitor's chairs and sits on the bed with Reti. JACK steps into the spotlight.)

JACK

Hello?

OPE

Jack, it's Ope. Ekason eh-kah-sun (*Good Evening*).

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh ? How did you get this number?

OPE

Your mother gave it to me.

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, my mother died 10 years ago...

OPE

It was before she died.

(beat.)

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, this isn't a good time for me.

OPE

What could you possibly be doing?

JACK

I have family over here.

OPE

Hmm... family. That's very nice for you Jack.

JACK

I have to go, I'm sorry.

OPE

Wait, wait, wait!

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, please, I...

OPE

It's Reti ray-tea...

JACK

What happened? Is she okay?

OPE

No, Jack...

JACK

She give you my number? I... She never called me, so I thought...

OPE

No, no she didn't.

JACK

Hmm...

OPE

I found the note and I hid it before she could find it herself.

(beat.)

JACK

How could you do that? Goodnight, Ope aw-kpeh.

(JACK hangs up the phone and exits. OPE panicking redials the number.)

TRACK:8

(JACK picks up the phone after a million rings.)

JACK

Stop calling this number!

TRACK:6

OPE

I went to Babalawo bah-bah-lah-woe (the witch doctor)! He said that Reti is lost in Ekiti aye-key-tea. Here! Her body is with me, I can touch her, I can see her breath. I can feel her heart beat, Jack, but her spirit is gone. She's not here anymore. Her eyes haven't opened for six weeks. You are the only one, he says, that can reach her and wake her up!

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, you cannot believe Babalawo bah-bah-lah-woe. Baba's are con artists. Notorious liars. This money that you will spend on Babalawo bah-bah-lah-woe, you could be spending on real doctor at a real hospital!

OPE

She *is* at a hospital, Jack! Do you think I'm stupid? I've tried everything! Nothing has worked. You need to come back to Nigeria. The elders say it's the only way that she will return. She's gone to find you, Jack, if she doesn't return her death will be on your head.

(beat.)

JACK

Two weeks.

OPE

Hmm?

JACK

I need two weeks.

OPE

Two weeks?!

JACK

Ope aw-pkeh, I need some time to get my things in order. I can't just pack up and leave. I can be there in two weeks.

(The nurse, AGBEBI, enters from the lobby.)

AGBEBI

Ma, you have visitors.

OPE

Ose oh-shay (**thank you**), my dear. Tell them I'm coming.

AGBEBI

Yes, ma.

(AGBEBI exits while OPE places JACK's note back into the stuffed dog. She packs the dog into her purse.)

Okay. Okay, Jack, two weeks.

JACK

You're still in Ekiti aye-key-tea?

OPE

Yes, at Orire oh-ree-ray Hospital. I have to go, but call me when you arrive. This is my number.

JACK

Oh, okay.

(beat.)

OPE

Okay.

(The two are covered in a pale blue light. Offstage the sound of laughter bellows into Jack's office and snaps the two back into reality.)

OPE

Goodnight, Jack.

(OPE hangs up the phone and lingers by Reti's hospital bed lost in thought.)

JACK

Jenny!

(JACK exits, disoriented.)

LIGHTS DOWN

TRACK:9

TRANSITION - DRUMS

SCENE [III]

LIGHTS UP ON THE HOSPITAL

TRACK:5

(Moonlight covers RETI as she wakes up with a gasp. She steps out of the hospital bed and off of the platform into the downstage playing area. The stage transforms into a meadow. Upstage center, she finds a golden mold of Zeus's head. Mesmerized, she reaches out to touch it but the sound of a talking drum startles her away. IFE enters stage left hooded and wrapped in layers of clothing. She beats her Gangan **gon gon** as she sings.)

TRACK:10

IFE

(Singing)

*There is fire on the mountain,
And nobody seems to be on the run.
Oh, there is fire on the mountaintop,
And no one is a running.*

(IFE continues to hum and beat her drum absentmindedly as she walks. BINU enters behind her passionately displeased.)

BINU

Weh are we?

IFE

Where you'd least expect us to be.

BINU

(with sass.) Why don't you ever ansa any-ting directly?

IFE

Why do you ask so many questions, Binu? Don't you trust

me?

BINU

Trust you? I don't even know you.

(IFE laughs and begins to beats her drum. BINU covers her ears.)

TRACK:11

IFE

Iberu, bo sita ee-beh-roo buh-see-tah (come outside)!

(BERU enters, dragging her feet, from stage right.)

BERU

Who is calling me?

(BERU recognizes her friend.)

Ife? Ifemi? Is that you?

(The two friends embrace.)

IFE

Yes, my friend.

BERU

Ife, wow, it has been so long. What brings you to the edge of the forest?

IFE

I have come here to find a woman named Reti ray-tea.

BERU

Reti... I know Reti. We were close friends in her childhood.

IFE

I know. I thought she might be here. We need to find her and bring her to Ooto oh-taw. Has she been here?

BERU

No... Wait. Reti is here? How is that possible?

IFE

Her spirit is lost. We've been searching for her for over two months. The meadow looks like it is staying intact, but the rest of the forest has rejected her. I figured she would come here to find you, but you haven't seen her?

BERU

No.

IFE

Hmm... Wherever Reti **ray-tea** has been the forest has become dark and void of life. Soon the entire forest will shrivel and die. We need your help to find her, Beru. Will you come with us.

(BERU looks uncomfortable.)

BERU

No, I must stay here and look after the meadow.

IFE

The meadow will die if we don't find her, Beru, no matter what you do. The forest cannot survive with her here. The longer she stays the faster the forest will fade and us with it. It is our duty to find Reti and bring her back to her own world.

BINU

I have a question.

IFE

Of course you do.

BINU

Yees, hi. Who dee fuck are you?

IFE

Oh, yes. Excuse me. Binu, this is my old friend, Beru. Beru helped me bring Reti up as a child. She taught Reti discernment and sometimes burdened her with guilt so that she would be an honest child.

BERU

Ife was there to keep Reti warm and encourage her to connect with other people.

IFE

Binu, you have arrived as a result of Reti's most recent journey, to connect with her father. This journey, unfortunately, is yours to lead, but we need Beru for... balance.

BINU

Sweeeet. And who is Ooto oh-taw and how do we fin dem?

IFE

Ooto oh-taw, the truth. He lives in the heart of the forest. Ooto oh-taw has a direct line to the outside world. He will know how to help Reti out of the forest.

BERU

How long is this journey?

IFE

It is a week's travel. First we must pass the plains of the Greek temple, and then the clearing with the lions and gladiators, and finally, and worst of all, we must venture through the carnival where Sad Clown lives. Ooto's oh-taw village is just beyond the carnival. If we can make it through...

BERU

If?

`IFE

We will make it through! But if we don't...

BINU

Hey, at least we tried. I'm not going out laigabitch.

(BERU is paralyzed with fear.)

BERU

I can't.

(BINU blows up.)

BINU

Hey, thanks for noh-ting, foolish goat. (She hisses from between her teeth) Pstchew... Let's go, Ife.

IFE

No, Binu. I'm no longer a young girl, I cannot make this journey with your anger alone by my side and you don't know where you're going. So, either we all go together or no one goes at all. We need Beru.

(IFE sits, crosses her legs, and closes her eyes. She meditates as BINU and BERU look on in awe.)

BINU

Okay, whateva, let's go. Are you in or not?

IFE

Beru, I will not let anyone hurt you.

BERU

I don't think I can do it, Ife.

(IFE winces.)

IFE

Binu, sit down.

BINU

Are you kidding me?

IFE

No. Sit down.

(BINU sits down and crosses her arms.)

BINU

This is bullshit.

IFE

We will stay here until you decide.

(IFE stares unfocused into the distance. Her forehead wrinkles.)

It's either all of us or none of us at all.

TRACK:9

TRANSITION - DRUMS

SCENE [IV]

TRACK: 6

THE HOSPITAL.

(RETI is back in bed. OPE, JACK,
and JENNY enter from the lobby.)

JENNY

Thank you so much for getting us from the airport,
Ope...

OPE

You can call me Mommy Reti.

JENNY

Oh, uh, Mommy Reti, sorry. I'm so sorry about your
um... your daughter. If there's any way that we can
help, please let us know. If it's a financial need it's
not a burden to us at all, really.

OPE

I don't need your help, Jenny. I need his. Jack, this
is your daughter, Reti.

(JACK goes over to Reti and takes a long
look. He smiles.)

JACK

She looks like me.

OPE

Excuse me.

(OPE pushes JACK away from the hospital
bed, and cradles RETI.)

Agbebi!

(Offstage) AGBEBI

Ma?

OPE

Watch Reti while I go to the market.

(Offstage)AGBEBI

Yes, ma.

OPE

I think it would be best if I left for now. If anything changes tell Agbebi and she will call me immediately.

(OPE looks at JENNY with scorn and exits.)

I won't be long.

JENNY

She hates me.

JACK

She does not hate you.

JENNY

Yes, she does. I can see it in her eyes. Do you see the way she looks at me?

JACK

You called her by her first name.

JENNY

Is that bad? How could I have possibly known?

JACK

It's my fault, I should have told you. It's not personal.

(JENNY pouts.)

Jenny, please. This is a very difficult situation for me...

JENNY

And you think this is easy for me?

JACK

No, but...

(The fight is cut off by the entrance of

the twins. TAIWO and KENNY enter stage right.)

KENNY

So, there is definitely not a vending machine here.

TAIWO

I told you there wouldn't be. We're in the middle of the forest, what did you think.

KENNY

(mockingly) What did you think...

(KENNY sees RETI.)

KENNY

Woah. Is that her? She's beautiful.

(JENNY, for the first time, looks at RETI. She is caught off guard by KENNY's comment.)

TAIWO

(sternly) Kenny, that is not an appropriate thing to say right now.

(TAIWO nods in JENNY's direction.)

JENNY

What? No, I'm fine! Are you girls hungry? I was going to go find something to eat, soon. Would you like to join me?

KENNY

I'm not hungry.

TAIWO

I'll come.

(KENNY pinches TAIWO.)

TAIWO

Ow!

JENNY

Kenny, don't pinch your sister. Jack are you hungry?

(JACK, still sitting by RETI makes an awkward attempt to reach her.)

JACK

Wake up, eh. Your mother and I are worried about you.

(Beat. RETI remain unresponsive.)

Uh, yes, let's go eat. I'll come with you. Kenny, Taiwo? You are coming?

TAIWO

No, I'll stay back with Kenny. You can bring something back here can't you?

JACK

Sure.

JENNY

Are they safe here?

JACK

Yes, the hospital is very safe.

JENNY

Okay. Well, we'll be right back, girls.

(JENNY gives KENNY a look.)

JENNY

Behave yourselves.

(KENNY shoots a smile back a sweet as sugar.)

KENNY

We will, mom!

JACK

Stay here, eh? Do not leave. Do you understand me?

TAIWO & KENNY

Yes, dad.

(JACK and JENNY exit.)

(The sound of a heart monitor beeping.
Kenny pulls a flask out of her pocket.)

TAIWO

Kenny!

KENNY

What? You want some?

TAIWO

No! God, Kenny it's 9 o'clock in the morning.

KENNY

So? That's like one A.M. in Wisconsin. I would still be out right now. Anyway, I wanted to chat with you without mom and dad around. What happened on the plane last night? You looked like you were about to punch that guy sitting next to you.

TAIWO

Girl, nothing. He was chewing with his mouth open and it was getting on my nerves.

KENNY

That's all?

TAIWO

Yes. It was disgusting and he kept it up for 8 hours. Whatever, it's over now. Why do you ask?

KENNY

I don't know... it seemed like maybe there was something else going on.

(TAIWO goes to look at RETI.)

TAIWO

She's pretty.

KENNY

Right? Doesn't she looks like dad.

TAIWO

I suppose.

(Kenny squeals in excitement.)

KENNY

Taiwo... this is our sister!

TAIWO

This is not *my* sister. I don't know this woman.

(RETI's heart rate suddenly spikes.
TAIWO moves, nose upturned, to sit down
in the guest chairs upstage right. and
KENNY runs to the lobby door to get
AGBEBI.)

KENNY

Hey nurse, some thing's going on!

(AGBEBI enters and places the oxygen
mask on Reti's face.)

Is she alright?

AGBEBI

Mm? Oh, yes, she'll be alright. You'll never believe
me, but I think it is a good sign. It's her way of
engaging with us. Keep talking to her, let her know
your here. She likes it.

KENNY

Do you think she'll wake up soon?

AGBEBI

Mmm... That will depend on your father.
It is our belief that Reti's spirit is lost, here, in
Ekiti **aye-key-tea**. Mrs. Ope **aw-kpeh** believes that your
father is the only one who can still make contact with
her and guide her back. If Reti's spirit is no longer
in Ekiti **aye-key-tea** and she is too far lost then...
well, we have to hope.

(KENNY and TAIWO exchange looks. AGBEBI changes the bed sheets.)

TAIWO

What happened?

AGBEBI

Hmm?

TAIWO

How did her spirit get "lost"?

AGBEBI

Reti and I are from the same small village in Ekiti **aye-key-tea** called Ijurin **ee-jew-ring**. It's about one hours drive south. In Ijurin **ee-jew-ring**, most women marry and leave to go to their husbands village, but Reti decided to go to university in Abuja **ah-boo-jah**. When she came back, she built a school in Ijurin **ee-jew-ring** and became a teacher, a surprise for us all. She taught children that it was okay to leave Ekiti **aye-key-tea** on their own. "Leave Nigeria!" she said, "The world is too big of a place to stay in such a small space." We all heard the rumor of her father who went to America to be with another woman.

(TAIWO and KENNY squirm uncomfortably.)

Oh, ha, sorry. It's ehm... ehm, some people bashed her for feeding their children false hope and lies. But Reti truly believed that children must be free to roam. Her own mother being as strict as she is kept Reti at home all of the time, but Reti means hope in Yoruba **yo-roo-bah**, and she took her name very seriously. She was always beaming with light and ideals for the future, but about three months ago she stopped being herself. She started to look drained and tired all the time and she stopped smiling. It was like all the light was gone from within her. One month later she was in the hospital. That was two months ago.

(KENNY and TAIWO are stunned. AGBEBI

takes a step back self consciously.)

AGBEBI

Excuse me, I've spoken too much.

(AGBEBI exits. KENNY pulls out her flask.)

KENNY

That was wild. Are you sure you don't want a swig of this?

TAIWO

No, Kenny.

KENNY

Listen, I think it'll help this whole situation.

TAIWO

No!

KENNY

Okay! Buzz kill.

TAIWO

Watch your tone with me.

KENNY

(exasperated) Why did you come, Taiwo? You have been grouchy since the minute we set foot on the plane. Loosen up!

TAIWO

You need to put it together! Someone is dying here and you're partying? What is wrong with you?

KENNY

You're looking for a fight and I'm not going to give in to you.

(AGBEBI re-enters.)

AGBEBI

Excuse me, it's time to change her bed pan.

(TAIWO and KENNY step away from RETI and sit in the hospital room's guest chairs. The transition continues as ABEBI begins to change the bed pan.)

AGEBI

(singing)

*So little Lucy turns sixteen
And like the movies she's been seeing,
She has a lover in her daddy,
She can't tell nobody,
Till she make the evening news for there is
Fire on the mountain...*

LIGHTS DOWN.

TRACK:9

TRANSITION - DRUMS

SCENE [V]

LIGHTS UP ON THE MEADOW.

(Evening. BINU is chewing gum and blowing bubbles. IFE is in the same cross legged position center stage. BERU enters stage right in tears. She is holding a large withered plant.)

IFE

Beru. Good evening.

(BINU looks at the dead plant in disgust.)

BINU

What dee hell is that?

BERU

It's my cola-nut bush. I was out tending to the forest and it withered and died before my eyes. Is it possible that one spirit can cause such harm?

IFE

Yes, if the spirit has wondered to where it doesn't belong. Reti is sucking the life out of her surroundings.

(IFE stands and takes the dead cola-nut branch. She studies it closely.)

IFE

Hmm... We don't have long, Beru, what is your decision?

(BERU is about to speak when there is a rustling in the trees. The three dreamers turn to see who has arrived and are suprised to see RETI step into the meadow. RETI sees the dreamers, freezes for a moment and then runs in the opposite direction.)

BINU

Hey... wait!

IFE

Binu...

(BINU runs to stop RETI. She reaches out to grab her.)

IFE

Binu, don't touch her!

(IFE takes out her drum and holds it up to the wind. The ancestors speak through the drum.)

GANGAN (NARRATOR)

Reti, duro!

(RETI freezes and slowly turns around.)

RETI

How do you know my name?

(As she speaks, the meadow slowly begins to wilt and die. The once warm meadow is flooded with a cool blue light.)

BERU

My meadow!

RETI

Who are you?

IFE

Who are you?

RETI

I know who I am.

IFE

Do you?

RETI

Yes!

IFE

Then you know you shouldn't be here.

(beat.)

(IFE takes a step towards RETI.)

RETI

Stay away from me!

(RETI raises her hands towards IFE in warning. IFE does not flinch.)

BINU

(to BERU) This gal has some nehve.

IFE

Reti, we want to help you, dear. You are looking for Ooto oh-taw, right?

(RETI is taken aback. She looks around the meadow at IFE, BINU, and BERU.)

RETI

Yes... Do you... Are you...

IFE

No no, he's not here. But we can lead you to him.

BINU

You're a long way away, sweetthat. You-a goin' to need awa help.

IFE

We are leaving now to go look for him. Come with us.

(IFE takes a step forward. RETI steps back.)

RETI

Don't come so close to me.

(IFE continues to move towards RETI. She

gets close enough to put a hand on RETI
shoulder. IFE looks into RETI's eyes.)

IFE

Come with us, we will lead you to Ooto oh-taw.

(RETI shakes IFE off. IFE crumples to
the ground. BINU runs to her side.)

RETI

I can make it on my own, just tell me where he is.

BINU

Are you okay?

IFE

I'm alright, I'm alright.

RETI

Where is he!

(BERU looks around at her desolate
meadow and makes a decision.)

BERU

Stop! You... you are coming with us.

BERU

Us?

BERU

You don't belong here. Look! Look around at what you've
done. We are leaving now and you are coming with us.

IFE

Yes, let's go.

(IFE gets up slowly and painfully. She
struggles to find her way.)

Beru, Binu, help me.

BINU

Ife, wha happen?

(IFE removes her hood to reveal her eyes

are white. IFE is blind.)

BINU

This is a joke.

IFE

Binu, lead the way. We will follow you.

(BINU and IFE exits stage left. BERU follows close behind. RETI takes one last look at the meadow and exits with her new friends.)

TRACK:00

TRANSITION-DRUMS

SCENE [VI]

THE NEXT DAY.

(Lights up to the sounds of a bustling hospital floor. JENNY, KENNY, and TAIWO enter the hospital room.)

KENNY

God, Taiwo, that is so like you!

JENNY

Give it to me now, Kenny!

(KENNY reaches into her bag and pulls out her flask. JENNY opens it and smells what's inside.)

JENNY

Where did you even get this, Kenny?

KENNY

They were selling it outside.

JENNY

(Scoffing.) Yeah, okay.

KENNY

Why would I make that up?

JENNY

Was it the nurse?

KENNY

No!

JENNY

I'm telling your father.

(JENNY exits. KENNY sneers at her sister.)

KENNY

Thanks, Taiwo.

(JACK enters)

TAIWO

Hi dad.

KENNY

Hi dad.

JACK

Hello girls. Kenny, can I speak with you?

(JACK takes KENNY to the other side of the room.)

Your mother is telling me that you are drinking. What's your problem?

(KENNY stays quite.)

Okay, look. The drinking isn't the problem for me, Kenny. It's that we're in an unfamiliar territory. Who even gave it to you? Do you know? Do you know where they got it from? Kenny, I don't want anything to happen to you. You have to be more careful, okay?

KENNY

Yes, dad.

JACK

I love you, eh? If you need anything just let me know. I'm your father, I would do anything for you.

(JACK winks at KENNY and she smiles.)

Oya **oh-yah** (**Alright**) go follow your mother. We'll soon be leaving. Taiwo, watch your sister, eh?

TAIWO

Yes, daddy.

(The twins gather their belongings and exit into the lobby. JACK turns to RETI,

they are alone for the first time. A beat as JACK struggles with what to say. Enter AGBEBI.)

AGBEBI

Mr. Dapo.

(She kneels down to greet him.)

JACK

Ah, Agbebi **ah-gbay-bee**. Bawoni **bah-woe-knee** (**How are you?**)?

AGBEBI

Adupe **ah-doo-kpeh** , sa **sah** (**We're thankful, sir**).

(AGBEBI begins to change the sheets.)

JACK

Ose **oh-shay** (**Thank you**).

(JACK, uncomfortable, returns to RETI's side.)

JACK

Hello, Reti. My name is Jack Spilde Dapo, My school mates, your mother is one of them, they call me Jack. I am your father.

TRACK:12

(RETI's heart rate raises.)

JACK

Are you there? **(beep beep!)** Can you hear me? **(beep beep!)** Reti?

(RETI's heart rate climbs to a dangerous level. JACK runs to the lobby door.)

JACK

Agbebi **ah-gbay-bee**? Agbebi **ah-gbay-bee**!

(AGBEBI enters and checks the monitors.)

JACK

Is everything okay?

AGBEBI

She's having trouble breathing.

(AGBEBI takes off the oxygen mask and begins doing manual compressions on RETI. OPE enters as the chaos builds.)

OPE

What is going on? Agbebi ah-gbay-bee?

(OPE pushes JACK out of the way and runs to RETI's bedside.)

OPE

What happened?

(JACK reaches out to pull OPE away from the hospital bed.)

JACK

Let her do her work.

OPE

Don't touch me!

AGBEBI

She's fine now, ma.

(The three watch as RETI's heart rate returns to normal.)

OPE

How much longer will she stay like this?

AGBEBI

Mommy Reti, it won't be long, eh? Her father is here, he will find her.

(JENNY enters.)

JENNY

Hello, Reti's mom. Jack, it's time to go. The girls are getting hungry.

JACK

Ah, Jenny... Ope **aw-kpeh**, Agbebi **ah-gbay-bee** give us a moment.

(JACK leads JENNY to the stage right section of the platform.)

JACK

I think I need to stay here for tonight.

JENNY

Okay, then we'll wait with you.

JACK

No, no it's alright, please. Go. Take the twins to the hotel. I'll be back in the morning.

JENNY

Jack...

JACK

Yes?

JENNY

You can see her in the morning.

JACK

Jenny, she's not doing well. I need to talk to Ope **aw-kpeh** about why I'm here. Once I figure out what she wants, then we can all go back home.

(JENNY can't quite get herself to leave. She eyes OPE and picks up a haughty air.)

JENNY

It is not your fault that she can't take care of her own child.

JACK

I left them, Jenny, if what the village people are saying is true than this is partly my fault too.

JENNY

Jack, you cannot let these people drag you down with them.

JACK

These people are my family.

JENNY

No, me and the twins, we're your family.

JACK

I have to stay, Jenny.

JENNY

Okay, Jack. Fine. We'll be expecting you in the morning for breakfast, hmm?

JACK

Without a doubt!

(JENNY exits.)

JACK

Goodnight, Jenny.

OPE

(sarcastically) She's a good one.

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, why am I here? Help me to understand. If the doctors cannot help her, then what can I do?

OPE

You think I know, Jack? The elders have taken the decision out of my hands. Reti needs you here and so you're here. That's all I know.

AGBEBI

Mr. Dapo, will you be staying here tonight?

OPE
No.

SPILE
Yes.

OPE
Agbebi ah-gbay-bee, leave us.

(AGBEBI exits.)

OPE
Absolutely not, Jack.

JACK
Ope, you heard me tell my wife I was staying, right?
I'm staying.

OPE
Jack, I'm too tired to stay with you and I don't want
to be in a room with you all night.

JACK
Then go home.

OPE
It's not going to happen, Jack.

JACK
You don't have anything to worry about, I'm her father.
Go home, take care of yourself, and let me take over
for one night. I can tell you need the rest.

OPE
It's not a good idea.

JACK
Why else am I here, Ope aw-kpeh? Let me try to do
something. Ope aw-kpeh?

(OPE pulls a small stuffed dog out of
her purse. JACK recognizes it
immediately)

OPE
"There is always a place for you in America..." You
would have taken her away from me.

JACK

I gave her the choice. You had no right to take that away from her.

(JACK snatches the dog from OPE.)

OPE

When she was younger she would say, "Mommy, I want to be a dog." I would say, of course you cannot be a dog, you are a beautiful young girl! But she would pout, "Hmm... mommy, dogs are free to roam this forest. They can go wherever they want, anywhere! Yoruba girls are not free to roam, mommy. I want to be free." This dog gave her hope. It was as if she knew that she... One night, Jack. You can stay for one night. Agbebi ah-
gbay-bee!

(AGBEBI enters.)

AGBEBI

Yes, ma.

OPE

If anything happens to my daughter. I will hold you personally responsible. Do you understand?

(AGBEBI nods and exits. OPE kisses RETI's forehead and exits. JACK positions himself awkwardly on the hospital bed and falls asleep holding the stuffed dog.)

TRACK:13

LIGHTS TRANSITION

SOUND OF WATER AND WAVES

SCENE [VII]

(The quite shushing of waves against a shore. Downstage is lit in the reflective blues of a lake at night. RETI sits on the edge of the platform with two fishing rods. JACK stands behind her.)

RETI

Would you like to join me?

(JACK sits.)

JACK

Reti?

RETI

Hello, dad. Here.

(RETI hands JACK a fishing rod. (miming)
He helps her to bait it and cast. The
two enjoy the quality time together.)

RETI

Have you spoken with my mother?

JACK

Yes.

RETI

How is she?

JACK

The same.

RETI

You look less impressive than I thought you would be for someone who is rumored to be living in America.

JACK

Well, America's not that impressive. The working toilets are nice though.

RETI

Ekiti has working toilets now, Dad.

JACK

Anyway, I'm back in Nigeria. I came for you.

RETI

You're in Nigeria?

JACK

Yes.

RETI

A little late for that now, isn't it?

JACK

It's *never* to late. I left you a note with my number on it. It said "call when you're ready".

RETI

Ah, the note.

(JACK, mesmerized, takes a look around. He cannot see past the lake.)

JACK

Where are we?

RETI

Where would you like us to be?

JACK

I want us to be together.

RETI

Then we are.

JACK

No, really. You, me, your sisters, and my new... Your sisters are waiting for you. They can't wait to meet you.

RETI

Sisters?

JACK

Twins! Taiwo and Kenny. They traveled with me to see you.

(JACK reaches for his wallet.)

RETI

They have Nigerian names.

JACK

Nigeria is home. They have to know where they come from.

RETI

Lucky them.

(JACK pulls out his wallet and shows RETI the picture of the twins. RETI recognizes BINU and BERU.)

RETI

They look happy.

JACK

The twins?

RETI

No, Binu and Beru. Those are my friends. They live here with me.

JACK

Live here? Reti, this is not your home.

RETI

It is now. I can't stand to go back. The village people sneering at me. Treating me like dirt because I don't have a father. You and mom won't tell me the truth so I'm going to find it out for myself. Binu, Beru, and Ife are leading me to Ooto oh-taw.

JACK

Reti, I can tell you the truth.

RETI

No, you can't.

JACK

Try me!

RETI

Why don't you and my mom love each other?

JACK

Hmm... now that is a very complicated question.

(RETI starts to pack up the rods.)

RETI

See?

JACK

Ah, ah. No, let me try!

RETI

I want the truth. Straight up.

(JACK cannot find the words.)

RETI

That's what I thought. Either I find Ooto oh-taw or I die in the search. I won't go back without the truth.

JACK

Reti...

RETI

You came because I'm unwell, right?

JACK

Yes!

RETI

If I stayed in Ekiti aye-key-tea , living as I did, with a fake smile plastered on my face, feeding school children ideals of hope and freedom without finding my own... You never would have come. You would have forgotten me.

JACK

No. Never.

RETI

I have to do this.

(Offstage left The sound of a Gangan.)

TRACK:10

GANGAN (IFE)

(singing)

There is fire on the mountain,
And nobody seems to be on the run.
Oh, there is fire on the mountaintop,
And no one is a running.

RETI

I have to go. It's almost morning. No one knows I came here to see you. No one knows I know my way out of here and they can't ever find out.

JACK

Come with me.

RETI

I can't. I'm not finished here yet. Goodnight, dad, tell my mother I love her.

JACK

Reti, wait!

(JACK pulls out the stuffed dog.)

This is for you.

(RETI takes it and smells the fur.)

RETI

Thank you.

(RETI exits)

(JACK tries to follow RETI, but is pulled back into the real world. He

wakes up with a start in the hospital
bed and races to the lobby door.)

JACK

Agbebi ah-gbay-bee! Call Ope aw-kpeh.

TRACK:9

TRANSITION - DRUMS

SCENE [VIII]

A CLEARING IN THE FOREST.

(IFE, BINU, AND BERU are resting. RETI enters quietly into the clearing as not to wake the group. The glow of blue water lights the forest behind her. She silently packs her bags and is about to exit stage right. when IFE's Gangan makes a sound.)

GANGAN (NARRATOR)

Dide, dide, awon emi dide! **(Wake up, wake up you spirits wake up!)**

IFE

Reti, where are you going?

RETI

Thank you so much for your help, Ife, I'm so grateful, but it's time for me to continue this journey alone.

BINU

So you-a sneaking away in de middle of de night because you're grrateful (*r is tapped*)... Mmm... okay.

IFE

Reti, what's happened?

RETI

I should have never come with you in the first place. I was doing fine on my own.

BERU

But, Reti, it's not safe.

RETI

Beru, I've made it two months on my own in this forest.

IFE

Reti, we're so close. Why are you leaving now?

RETI

I do better on my own.

(RETI moves to exit, but is stopped by the sound of carnival music. She is cloaked with a heaviness.)

RETI

Oh, no.

BINU

What is that music?

(IFE sniffs the air. She slowly covers her Gangan.)

IFE

We've made it to the carnival.

TRACK:5

RETI

I've... I've been here before. The clown...

IFE

It lives here. Have you seen it? Reti? Let's move quickly. If we move quickly enough we can make it through the carnival before it sees us. Keep your eyes open, they could be anywhere.

BINU

They?

BERU

The moon is out, so we should be safe.

BINU

Wait, who is they?

(SAD CLOWN enters out of the shadow with two shadowy figures behind them. SAD CLOWN is in colorful clown clothing and carries a large machete. IFE senses SAD CLOWN's entrance.)

BERU

The shadows. Let's go, the moon can be unpredictable in this part of the forest and one must never be in the Carnival when the moon is not around.

SAD CLOWN

Hello.

RETI/BINU/BERU

Ah!

RETI

You...

SAD CLOWN

Hello.

IFE

Hello clown. We don't want any trouble today. Will you please let us through your carnival?

SAD CLOWN

Sure! Well, first you're going to have to play some games!

IFE

No. No, thank you. We don't have a lot of time.

SAD CLOWN

Please, just one? An easy one!

BINU

She said no!

IFE

Binu...

SAD CLOWN

Oh. Okay.

(The moon begins to wane. BERU tugs at IFE's clothes.)

BERU

Let's go.

SAD CLWON

The exit is that way.

IFE

Thank you very much.

SAD CLOWN

Will you visit me again?

BINU

Hell no.

IFE

Oh, I'm not sure. It's very far from where we come from.

SAD CLOWN

Oh.

(The moon wanes again. It is now at half. The SHADOWS become more and more opaque as the moon continues to wane.)

BERU

We have company.

RETI

What the hell?

SAD CLOWN

(pointing at Reti) You... You came to visit me!

(BINU steps in between RETI and the clown.)

BINU

Aye, man, back up.

IFE

Binu, ah this is not your fight.

(The dreamers look at RETI who is frozen

in fear.)

RETI

Stay... stay away from me.

IFE

We can come back another time, clown, but we have to go now. I don't think you're friends want us to stay.

(SAD CLOWN grabs the machete on their hip and slowly takes it out of its holster.)

SAD CLOWN

What friends?

BERU

It's gone, Ife!

(The dreamers look up. There is no moon in the sky.)

(SAD CLOWN points their machete at the dreamers. The shadow figures creep closer and closer from behind the SAD CLOWN.)

RETI

Not this again... Why did you lead me here?

BERU

Ife! What do we do?

BINU

I got dis.

(BINU finds a large stick and runs towards the SAD CLOWN.)

IFE

Binu, no!

(Before BINU can reach the clown, The

SHADOWS swoop BINU off the ground and carry her six feet away from SAD CLOWN.)

SHADOWS (NARRATOR)

Six feet of distance/is best from clowns.

SAD CLOWN

I hear them. I can hear them. Go away! I want to play with my new friends!

(SAD CLOWN's eyes begin to glow red)

BERU

Ife, do something!

IFE

Cover your ears!

TRACK:14

(The dreamers cover their ears as IFE plays a loud, feverish rhythm on her Gangan. SAD CLOWN and THE SHADOWS clutch their ears in pain and SAD CLOWN's machete falls to the ground in front of RETI.)

BINU

Pick it up!

SAD CLOWN

Stop it! It's too loud!

IFE

Go! Go!

(BERU and RETI run towards the exit. BINU picks up SAD CLOWN's machete and swings it in SAD CLOWN's direction.)

IFE

Binu, no! He is just a child. Let him go.

BINU

He looks like a crrazy (*r is tapped*) person to me!

(The SHADOWS hold SAD CLOWN back as they struggle to get their machete from BINU.)

SHADOWS

Go. Now.

(BINU, BERU, and RETI exit.)

SAD CLOWN

(growling) No, don't go. Stay and play games with me.

SHADOWS

Follow the light. It will lead you to Ooto.

IFE

Thank you.

(*She exits.* SAD CLOWN struggles against the grip of THE SHADOWS. They cannot hold them for much longer.)

SAD CLOWN

There is fire on the mountain. Run, run, run!

(SAD CLOWN continues screaming as THE SHADOWS pick them up and carry them offstage right.)

(The dreamers run into the woods. They look around to ensure that they are safe.)

RETI

Why did you bring me here?

IFE

Reti, calm down.

RETI

No! I don't want anything to do with you! I knew I should have gone on my own.

BERU

But, what if you had run into the clown on your own?

RETI

I would have escaped again. I always escape.

BERU

Reti, you can be very stubborn... If it wasn't for Ife...

RETI

If it wasn't for Ife the clown would be dead. Why did you stop Binu from killing it?

IFE

It wasn't her fight to fight.

BINU

Okay, okay, it's enough, eh? Les go.

RETI

I'm not going anywhere with you.

BINU

Ah, ah! Listen, we-a this fucking close, eh? Let's go!

RETI

No.

IFE

Reti...

BINU

No, let ha go! Psscchew. Ingrate.

BERU

But Binu...

BINU

Les go.

IFE

Are you sure you want to stay?

RETI

I'm fine on my own...

IFE

Okay.

(IFE lifts up her drum and hands it to
RETI.)

IFE

Take this. It will help you along the way. You're
journey seems longer than we thought my dear.

(RETI shocked doesn't know what to say.)

BINU

Oya oh-yah, let's go!

(BINU herds everyone off stage.)

BERU

Goodbye Reti.

(RETI is left alone in the forest. She
pulls out her stuffed dog from her
backpack and smells it.)

TRACK:9

BLACK OUT - DRUMS

ACT [II]

SCENE [I]

THE HOSPITAL. MORNING.

(RETI is convulsing in her bed. AGBEBI holds RETI's head while OPE grabs her arms. JACK and JENNY watch on helplessly.)

TRACK:15

AGBEBI

Hold them down!

(OPE struggles to keep RETI's arms at her sides.)

JACK

What happened? She was fine yesterday.

JENNY

Honey, we should go.

JACK

Jenny, stop. I'm not leaving now.

(Reti's heart rate spikes and she begins to moan.)

OPE

Ifemi ee-feh-mi! Reti, honey. Can you hear me? Darling?

(RETI's eyes stay closed, but she begins to speak.)

RETI

Ooto... Ooto... oh-taw

(JACK runs to RETI's bedside.)

JACK

What did she say? Where's her dog?

(JACK reaches into the hospital bed to look for the stuffed dog.)

OPE

Don't touch her!

JENNY

Mommy Reti, you asked him to come. Let him help.

JACK

Ope, I spoke with her. I gave her the dog.

OPE

What are you talking about?

JACK

The dog it's gone. She took it. I thought it was a dream, but...

OPE

Is this a joke to you?

JACK

I'm not joking! She told me she was looking for the truth... Ooto oh-taw! She told me that.

OPE

Get out, Jack.

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, listen to me! I reached her! We were fishing and I asked her to come back with me, but she said no. "I won't come back until I find Ooto oh-taw." That's what she said!

OPE

A dream? You went fishing with her in a dream? I've made a mistake. Reti was fine until you came here. The elders were wrong. You need to take your family and go home. We are better off without you.

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh...

OPE

Leave! Get away from us! Now!

AGBEBI

Mommy Reti...

JACK

No, Agbebi **ah-gbeh-bee**, it's okay. She read the note, that's why she's here, Ope **aw-kpeh**. You lied to her. You kept her from me, and now she's searching for the truth. She's lost and you can't help her. Reti, my dear, your daddy loves you.

(JACK kisses RETI's forehead then exits into the lobby.)

JENNY

It was nice to meet all of you.

(JENNY exits. OPE turns to AGBEBI.)

OPE

What do you know of this?

AGBEBI

It's true, ma. Reti told me she found her father's letter. It was around the time she started to become sick, but I didn't realize that it was the cause of her illness.

OPE

And you didn't tell me?

AGBEBI

Ah... it wasn't for me to tell, Mommy Reti.

OPE

Did I make a mistake?

(Agbebi sits beside OPE.)

AGBEBI

Did you hear what Mr. Dapo said? Reti is searching for Ooto **oh-taw**... The truth. Unless you're willing to

provide that for her, Reti will need her father.

OPE

I'm...

AGBEBI

We haven't heard from her in over two months time, mommy Reti. He was able to make contact with her in a few days.

OPE

I thought it would be me. I hoped she would make contact with me first.

AGBEBI

We should be happy that she's made contact at all. She's still alive, mommy Reti. She's fishing! Let us rejoice for God is doing a great thing. She's stable now. Go home and rest. I'll call you if anything changes.

(OPE takes her bag and exits stage right
AGBEBI takes a deep breath and smooths
out her nurses uniform. She sits by
RETI.)

Reti? Reti, are you still there? Speak if you can hear me.

(Silence. AGBEBI checks her vitals and
tries to sit her up with little success.
Finally, she gives up and grabs a
pudding cup from the pantry. She sits
down, exhausted, opens the pudding cup,
and eats.)

LIGHTS DOWN.

SCENE [II]

LIGHTS UP. THE HOSPITAL.

TRACK:16

(Evening. The hospital is quiet except for the hum of the machines keeping RETI alive. She is now permanently attached to an oxygen machine. OPE is beside the hospital bed holding RETI's hand.)

(JACK enters from the lobby.)

JACK

I'm sorry. It was wrong of me to accuse you of...

OPE

You have a bad habit of not announcing yourself when you enter a room.

JACK

It's late, I thought you would be asleep.

OPE

Sleep? Ha. I haven't know sleep for two months.

(OPE looks at RETI who makes a small guttural noise that last a few seconds.)

JACK

How long has she been doing that?

OPE

Since this morning.

JACK

Hmm.

OPE

Ooto oh-taw. Once in a while she whispers, "Ooto" oh-taw. I should have told her the truth. I thought that if I told her you left us without a word she wouldn't

go looking for you. It seems I was wrong.

JACK

Why didn't you tell her?

OPE

That you left me for a white woman?

JACK

That I wanted to see her.

OPE

I wanted her to believe that you were dead. But then the village hens began to cluck and she quickly suspected that I hadn't been telling her the entire truth.

JACK

It's not too late. Anyway, we leave tomorrow.

OPE

Wow. So soon?

JACK

Not soon enough for Jenny. The way of life here doesn't sit well with her. The twins want to stay.

OPE

If you brought Jenny home more often wouldn't she learn to adjust?

JACK

Come home for what? You wouldn't let me see Reti and once my mother died there was no reason for me to come home anymore.

OPE

I guess I'm not important to you.

JACK

Ope aw-kpeh, you have never made me feel welcome.

(JACK looks at RETI who is tied to multiple machines. He sighs.)

JACK

I understand why you didn't want me to be a part of her life back then, you were angry, and I was vicious but, Ope, I am not the same man today that I was then. I failed her once before, I don't want to do it again.

OPE

It wasn't that you left me Jack. It's *how* you left me and with who. Fun asewo oyimbo kan **foon-ah-sheh-woe-oh-yin-boe-kon** (**For a white slut**).

JACK

Ope **aw-kpeh**, watch your mouth.

OPE

You left me in shame and embarrassment.

JACK

Enough. We're here now. I don't blame you for being upset with me, but Jenny has been nothing but kind to you since the moment she stepped foot into this hospital.

OPE

Why should I be upset? I knew your father. I should have known the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. They warned me. Two years after Reti was born your father came to me to tell me you had left for America. Of course I already knew by then, but when I asked him why you would leave without saying anything to me or to Reti. He told me that it was none of my business. "Know your place," he said to me.

JACK

Never listen to my father. I learned that at a young age.

OPE

I will never forgive you for leaving, Jack, but right now I can learn to forget if you stay. For Reti.

JACK

Ope **aw-kpeh**, you asked us to leave. We've bought our

plane tickets.

OPE

Jack, you are the only one who knows what Reti is going through right now. Your father was a rude, stubborn, and distant man who hurt you. Just like her father. I can see how that made it hard for you to connect with other people. You were always living in your own little world. Just like she is now. I understand now that you are the one one who can save Reti.

JACK

She doesn't want my help.

OPE

So be someone else! It's a dream, right?

(enter AGBEBI.)

AGBEBI

Visiting hours are about to end, Mr. Dapo. Thank you for coming to Ekiti aye-key-tea. Safe travels to you and your family.

OPE

Agbebi ah-gbay-bee, it's alright. Mr. Dapo is going to stay.

AGBEBI

Ah! Really?

JACK

I have to talk to my wife first, Jenny, uh... but if it's alright, I would like to stay.

AGBEBI

Of course! Thank you Mr. Dapo. Thank you.

JACK

Thank you, Agbebi ah-gbay-bee. You have taken great care of my daughter and I'm sure you had some hand in talking sense into my stubborn ex-wife.

OPE

Watch yourself.

JACK

It seems like stubbornness is not only a Dapo trait.

OPE

Agbebi ah-gbay-bee, you're excused.

(JACK and OPE clasp hands.)

Thank you, Jack.

TRACK:17

(They place their hands on RETI and
begin to pray.)

JACK & OPE

Our father,
Who art in heaven,
Halo be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread...

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

TRANSITION - DRUMS.

SCENE [III]

THE VILLAGE

(The dreamers enter in semi-darkness. There is a beam of light coming from offstage left. BINU is holding SAD CLOWN's machete with white knuckles. The silver of the blade reflects off of the thin beams of moonlight.)

BINU

So, what-a we going to do now?

BERU

Reti! Reti!

BINU

Would you shut up? She's not coming back. (beat.) I'm so tiyad of this dreary fucking forest. I thought that Ooto's village was after dee carnival.

(IFE sniffs the air.)

IFE

It is... Do you smell that?

BINU

Oh God, yes, I smell it. (to BERU) Do you smell dat?

BERU

It smells like dog shit.

(IFE and BINU double take to BERU.
They're surprised to hear her curse.)

BERU

What?

IFE

A dog? I have not heard of any kind of dog in this forest.

BERU

Neither have I.

BINU

I ain't seen noh-ting... Yo, I'm sick of dis shit,
wh eh-a we?

(Like a light switch lights come
up to full on stage. Red clay dust
covers the dreamers as they slow
to a stop. They have reached the
village. Behind them is a large
compound.)

BERU

We made it!

BINU

Praise Jesus!

IFE

You weren't scared were you?

BINU

No, I wasn't sceh-d. I dohn like the dark.

BERU

Weird...

BINU

Whuzzup?

BERU

I think I found the source of the smell.

(A large pile of dog poop is upstage
left BERU sniffs it.)

BINU

Oh, God. Come on, les go.

BERU

No, I feel her, she's close.

BINU

Who?

BERU

Reti!

BINU

Beru, she left, okay? She's gone! She's not coming back anytime soon.

IFE

Okay, okay... Let's all calm down. She said she was going to find Ooto, right? So, she'll be here. Eventually. Relax, eh?

(IFE sits in her cross legged pose. BINU taps her toes. She is struggling to stay patient.)

BINU

Look, she's not coming. We don't even know this gal, right? All we know is she's doing stuff that is causing destruction to this forest, but the forest always revives, Ife. Les go find Ooto, maybe ee'll be able to elp us kick-a ass back to where she came from. Where she's suppose to be.

(BINU heads upstage towards the city.
IFE stop her.)

IFE

Binu, for once listen to me and wait.

(BINU waits pouting. The crew waits in silence.)

BERU

I don't think she's coming.

IFE

Shhhhhhhhhh.

TRACK:18

(The city lights start to flicker. Large footsteps approach growing louder and louder. BERU perks up as they grow closer. The footsteps grow so loud that the ground begins to shake. The three dreamers fall to the ground as SAD CLOWN enters. They giggle and wave at the dreamers. The dreamers do not move.)

The moon must be out tonight, clown, you're in a good mood.

SAD CLOWN

Aww... Was that you making all that noise?

(BINU heads towards SAD CLOWN.)

IFE

Binu, stand back!

(IFE grabs BINU before she gets too close to SAD CLOWN.)

This is not your fight, remember?

(SAD CLOWN looks off stage into the woods from which he came.)

BINU

What? A puppy! Oooo... What's it going to do? Cuddle me to death?

(A Dog runs on stage. He runs past SAD CLOWN and into IFE's arms. In the distance the sound of a Gangan.)

TRACK:10

GANGAN (RETI)

There is fire on the mountain! Run, run, run.
There is fire on the mountain! Run, run, run.

(The dog licks BINU's face.)

BINU

No, no, get away from me. What is this ting?

(One shadowed figure approaches the dreamers slowly from the edge of the forest.)

BERU

Ife, what do we do?

IFE

I don't know.

BINU

Follow my lead.

(BINU picks up the dog and places the machete at his throat.)

IFE

Binu! No!

BINU

Step any clos-a and the fur ball gets sliced!

(BINU struggles to hold the squirming dog. He bites BINU's thumb, wiggles out, and exits into the forest.)

BINU

Ow!

(A moment later, RETI enters sheepishly. IFE's GANGAN is strapped over her shoulder and the stuffed dog is in her hands.)

IFE

It's Reti!

BINU

How do you know?

BERU

Seriously?! Stop! It's her. Reti, we're so happy to see you.

(Hope and fear embrace. BERU breaks the hug abruptly.)

BERU

Oh no!

RETI

No, you don't have to worry, I have control over it now. I won't hurt you, see?

(Reti places her hand gently on the ground, between her fingers a flower grows up from the clay.)

BINU

Thas a good sign.

BERU

I would say so.

BINU

Wait, what happen?

RETI

I missed you. I missed you all. Once you left, I was so angry at myself for letting you go, I was so lost. But I focused my feelings and I found the light and it led me here.

IFE

You followed your senses.

RETI

Yes! Yes, I think so. I've always admired dogs. They can roam wherever they want whenever they want, and they don't get lost because they have their wits about them. I wanted so much to be free that I lost track of who I was. But once you left, Ife, Binu, Beru, I realized that I had been holding something inside and when I looked, it was light. I love you. The forest

feels too big and lonely without all of you. I'm... I'm sorry.

(The dreamers surround RETI and embrace her.)

BINU

I was just making shoh it was really you and not some shadowy moda fucka. You rememba the clown.

TRACK:5

(BINU points at SAD CLOWN who has been watching the dreamers interaction with wonder and awe. RETI whips around in panic. She cannot take her eyes off of SAD CLOWN.)

RETI

You... How did it...?

IFE

It's okay, Reti, It;s okay.

(SAD CLOWN approaches RETI cautiously, RETI has lost control of her legs.)

RETI

Don't come near me!

(The clown cowers. It looks at IFE who nods her head. SAD CLOWN takes that as a sign to continue its approach.)

RETI

What are you doing?

IFE

The moon is out. Let him explore and then he'll leave us alone like any other pest.

(The SAD CLOWN is inches away from RETI and BINU. They stick their tongue out at BINU and smiles at RETI who is now

shaking with sobs.)

Oh... I can't do this. Please, IFE save me from this!

IFE

You can do this, Reti.

RETI

No, no, I can't.

IFE

Yes, you can.

RETI

I can't, I can't!

IFE

You can!

(SAD CLOWN nuzzles their head onto
RETI's shoulder.)

TRACK:19

IFE

(Singing & drumming)

One day the river will overflow,
And there'll be no where for us to go,
And we will run. Run. Wishing we had put out the fire.

(IFE stops drumming. SAD CLOWN is
asleep. THE SHADOWS carry SAD CLOWN away
to a soft patch of land and retreat into
the shadows.)

BINU

Well, the modafucka is cute when ee's sleeping.

(RETI touches her heart and listens.)

RETI

Thank you.

IFE

I did nothing you couldn't have done for yourself.

RETI

Ife, I'm ready to go home, but the truth is, I don't know how to anymore.

IFE

Let's find out together.

(IFE lifts her Gangan to the wind and the ancestors speak through the drum.

GON GON (NARRATOR)

"Ooto wan bi." Oh-taw-waan-bee. The truth is here. "Waa nibo eeti waa." Waa-nee-boe-eh-tee-waa. Look for him where you haven't yet looked.

IFE

The Elders say, "Ooto is near." And to "Look for him where you haven't yet looked." Waa nibo eti waa. Where could that be?

(IFE begins to drum absentmindedly. The dreamers ponder the riddle. BINU scopes the place out. Finally...)

RETI

The clown!

BINU

What?

RETI

Look where you haven't yet looked. I've spent so much time running from it that I missed him completely. (she laughs) It's so obvious!

BERU

What's so obvious?

(RETI crosses to the sleeping SAD CLOWN and gently wakes them up.)

RETI

Can I play a game with you?

SAD CLOWN

Really?

RETI

Yes. I think I owe you one.

(SAD CLOWN and RETI play tic tac toe or
some other childhood game. As they play,
the moon descends to the stage and a
trap door opens. OOTO steps out.)

OOTO

Can I join you?

TRACK:9

TRANSITION - DRUM

THE VILLAGE

(SCENE [IV])

(OOTO plays ayo I-yuh peacefully by himself. OOTO is dressed in a traditional Yoruba agbada and cap. The dreamers all try to speak to him at once but lose their breath when OOTO hold us his hand.)

OOTO

Exhale.

(OOTO releases the dreamers from his hold. He waits as the dreamers get their bearings.)

Welcome to Ekiti. Hello Clown!

(SAD CLOWN waves.)

IFE

Thank you.

(The dreamers kneel to great him. SAD CLOWN bows clumsily.)

IFE

Ooto...

OOTO

Yes.

IFE

This young woman is in need of your help.

OOTO

Let her speak.

(RETI gets up.)

RETI

You are Ooto?

OTO

Yes.

RETI

I've been looking for you.

OTO

Well, you have found me. What is it you would like to know?

RETI

I need to know the truth about...

(RETI pauses as she recognizes her father's face in OTO.)

RETI

Excuse me sir, you look familiar.

(OTO stares at her blankly. Embarrassed RETI goes on.)

RETI

I want to know about my father.

OTO

What is your father's name.

(RETI has to think for a moment.)

RETI

His name is Dapo... Jack Spilde Dapo.

OTO

Correct! A - mark (**a plus!**)! What would you like to know?

(RETI looks around. She is uncomfortable.)

RETI

(quietly.) I want to know why he left...

OTO

Speak up!

RETI

I want to know why my father left me. My mother and I.
He left when I was two.

OTO

As you wish.

(OTO takes RETI downstage center. He
takes her hand and channels JACK.)

OTO

Reti.

RETI

I knew it was you!

OTO

Reti... listen. Your father and mother married young
and out of necessity, not love. Not long after you were
born your father took a trip to the Americas. He
quickly met another woman, Jenny. It was a difficult
decision, but ultimately, your father chose love over
duty.

RETI

So, he left us for a white woman? Why didn't he ever
come back?

OTO

He has built a life in U.S. He drove taxis and worked
every kind of small, small job so that he could build a
life that you would be proud of. He wanted you to join
him.

RETI

So why didn't he come and find me?

OTO

He was scared.

RETI

Of who?

OTO

Reti, your mother is not to be messed with.

RETI

Oh, right.

OTO

She wouldn't let him see you or speak to you.

RETI

She told me that he died, but I knew that couldn't be true. I searched for him every way I could.

OTO

Your father is the reason you were able to attend a university outside of Ekiti, Reti. Unfailingly, your father would send 5,000 Naira a year to go towards your college fees. He was the one who gave you that stuffed dog when you were a baby. He never forgot you... He left you a note.

RETI

I know, I've read it.

OTO

Why didn't you call?

RETI

It was only recently. I didn't think he would know who I am.

OTO

Of course he does. Did you know that father calls you every year?

RETI

What? No.

OTO

Every year on October 15th.

RETI

That's my birthday!

OOTO

I know! Your father has never forgotten you.

(OOTO shakes off JACK. He is exhausted
from the effort.)

OOTO

Your heart has led you deep through the forest to Ooto.
Now you have it.

(IFE helps OOTO back to his seat.)

IFE

Ooto.

OOTO

Yes?

IFE

Where is her father now?

OOTO

He in Ekiti awaiting her return.

RETI

So, it's true? My father has come to Nigeria?

OOTO

I cannot tell a lie, my friend.

RETI

Ooto, I would like to go home.

OOTO

You can do so at anytime.

RETI

I've forgotten how.

OOTO

You've been dreaming, Reti. All you have to do is wake
up.

TRACK:4

(A moment. One by one the dreamers start to recognize one another. They are for a moment no longer the dreamers but TAIWO, KENNY, RETI, AGBEBI and JACK. RETI reaches out to IFE, BINU, and BERU.)

RETI

Thank you for not giving up on me.

BERU

We knew you could do it.

IFE

Well, some of us.

(They all look at BINU.)

BINU

Snitchees! I believed in you dee 'ole time.

RETI

Yeah, I'm sure. Will I see you again?

IFE

Reti, we're always here. We've always been here and here is where we'll stay as a part of you. You've made it through the journey and now you can reach us at any time.

OOTO

O ti ya oh-tee-yah (*It's time*).

(The sun comes up over the horizon. RETI says goodbye to the dreamers one by one as they exit. OOTO remains center stage. RETI steps onto the platform and climbs into the hospital bed. As she falls asleep OPE, JENNY, AGBEBI and the twins enter from the lobby door and surround her.)

OOTO

You have found Reti, well done. She always seems to be where you least expect her doesn't she? It is time for

her to go home where her powers can be used for good.
Oya dide, Reti oh-yah-dee-day (**Alright, wake up Reti**).
Wake up! Wake up, Reti, wake up.

TRANSITION

SCENE [V]

TRACK:16

(The stage is covered in a blinding orange light as we transition into the hospital room. OOTO has removed his agbada and cap. It was Jack all along. JACK winks at the audience and steps onto the platform. As soon as the downstage playing area is empty it is as if the dream world never existed. A hospital janitor enters and starts mopping the playing area. OPE and JACK are by RETI's bedside. AGBEBI is in the doorway of the lobby. TAIWO is asleep on the guest chairs. KENNY is standing anxiously by her mother in an upstage corner.)

JACK

Reti, wake up... Wake up, Reti. Wake up.

(RETI's eyes open.)

OPE

Thank God!

JACK

Welcome back to earth, love.

KENNY

Taiwo, she's awake!

JENNY

Kenny, shhh.

KENNY

Oh, sorry. Hi Reti!

JENNY

Hello.

TAIWO

Hi.

AGBEBI

Welcome back, Reti.

(RETI looks around she sees her
parents.)

JENNY

Come on girls, lets go. Happy to meet you, Reti,
welcome back.

(JENNY and the twins exit but not before
KENNY runs to give RETI a hug.)

KENNY

We'll talk later.

(She winks at RETI.)

(All exit. RETI is alone with her
parents. She takes a good look at JACK)

RETI

I can't believe that you're here.

JACK

I came as soon as I could. I've wanted to come for a
long time, but...

RETI

It's okay... we can talk about it later right?

JACK

Of course. You have my number?

RETI

It's memorized. Mommy.

OPE

Reti, ifemi, welcome home.

(RETI nuzzles her head on her mother's

shoulder.)

RETI

Thank you, mommy.

OPE

We thought that... I was afraid that I was too late.

RETI

I've never seen you together.

(JACK and OPE look at each other.)

JACK

We wouldn't be here without you, Reti. Our fight was so petty and we didn't take into consideration how much we were hurting you.

RETI

I'm just happy that you're here now.

AGBEBI

Mommy Reti. Sorry, we need you to sign some papers.

OPE

Okay, I'm coming. I'll be right back.

(OPE exits into the lobby. JACK and RETI are alone. For a while no one knows what to say. RETI breaks the ice.)

RETI

Ooto?

(JACK, caught of guard answers:)

JACK

Yes? Oh!

(RETI laughs)

RETI

I knew it was you!

JACK

Ma binu (*don't be angry*), eh?

TRACK:13

TRANSITION - SOUND OF WATER
AND WAVES

EPILOGUE

TRACK:20

LIGHTS UP

(The sound of motorcycles and traffic. JACK exits and RETI is alone in her hospital bed. She gets up and gets dressed as she speaks directly to the audience.)

RETI

If you could ask anything of truth itself, what would it be? Would you ask for a nicer car? Would it have to do with how you look? Your family? Your parents? You could know any truth. What would it be? How about a conspiracy theory? A celebrity? Yourself? I would ask, why is it so hard for us to see ourselves for who we truly are.

Look at me. Do you see me? Truly, do you see me or do you see what you've already assumed me to be? It doesn't really matter though, does it, because I see your stares. I can see you! And you don't hide your stares well. I know what you think of me. And you know what? I agree with you. Even though, somewhere inside I know you're wrong. I chose to agree with you. To save myself time and energy, I agree. I choose to believe that you see me better than I can see myself. Judgment must be reserved for the weak of heart.

My name is Reti. Hope. How did I come to be? I was loved without measure. I was told that I am capable and smart. When I set my mind to something, I was taught to do it and do it well. My laziness was reprimanded and I was reminded that I need to fill my own cup before I fill anyone else's. I taught myself that sex is spiritual, I am precious, and my parent's issues are not my issues. I have been loved and have loved others. So, I will never again question if I am forgotten.

(RETI goes to the edge of the platform,
looks down and around, shakes her head
and exits into the lobby.)

END OF PLAY.