

FROM LANDS OF THE NIGHT

Characters and Performers

When baby Samson falls gravely ill, his parents take the advice of a healer and appeal to the ancestors for help in a special ceremony. Strange guests from lands of the night attend the festival. They include the ancestors, as expected and hoped for, but also one unexpected and surprising guest – Mola (God).

Guests from Lands of the Night

- Ancestors
- Angel One
- Angel Two
- Mola (God)
- Masked dancing giant of a man
- Old man with ears that reminds one of a hare
- Old Woman with a dress that shimmers and winks with stars
- Two shy nymph girls

Musicians

- Musician (instrumentalist)
- Singers

Ra-Eli, Samson's older sister

- Ra-Ego, Ra-Eli's alter ego or other self
- Ra-Eli, Ra-Eli's own self

Ra-Eli's father

Ra-Eli's mother

Samson, Ra-Eli's baby brother

The Healer

Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego are one and the same. Ra-Ego is the alter ego or other self of Ra-Eli, the main character. The two are like two sides of a coin. They can, as a result, both assume the character of Ra-Eli at the same time or separately. They can share or snatch words from each other in narration. They also can assume the role of this or that of other characters. In that capacity, they either speak their words, make an impression of a character or demonstrate something about him or her. Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego also share the task of narrating the story, as storytellers. Two performers therefore are required to play not only Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego, but through these two selves the other characters, while they narrate the story. So as storytellers do, the two performers in turn tell, tell and show at the same, demonstrate or give an impression of what happened in the story, and of the characters involved.

Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego get ready to perform.

Musician plays to open the performance.

Prologue. Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego start the performance, narrating to the audience.

RA-ELI One day my baby brother was well. The next day he had grown ill – very ill.

RA-EGO We tried everything.

RA-ELI We took him from one hospital to another.

RA-EGO We prayed for him.

Ra-Eli in the present looks at Samson, gravely sick in her arms, the way Ra-Eli could have done in the past.

RA-ELI But my baby brother grew only worse.

RA-EGO Then we took him to a healer.

Ra-Eli, as Re-Eli in the past, and Ra-Ego, as Ra-Eli's parents, travel to the healer.

Musician plays transitional music.

RA-ELI The healer looked over Samson's wasted body and into his eyes.

The healer, played by Ra-Ego, studies the body of sick Samson with a feeling touch all over it.

Then he turned to me.

The Healer (Ra-Ego) looks up at Ra-Eli.

THE HEALER *(to Ra-Eli)* Only the ancestors can save your baby brother, little girl.

RA-ELI The Healer turned to my parents.

The Healer addresses Ra-Eli's parents, played by Ra-Eli.

THE HEALER *(to Ra-Eli's parents)* Hold a ceremony to honor your ancestors and ask them for help, a joyful ceremony filled with guests.”

RA-EGO My mother stared at the healer with a painful frown.

Mother (Ra-Eli) stares at the Healer.

MOTHER *(to the Healer)* Joyful? How can we be joyful at a time like this?

RA-ELI The healer stared back at my mother.

THE HEALER *(to Mother)* A joyful ceremony it must be. Nothing less will bring ancestors from their lands of the night. Let's seek joy in hope. I'll spread word of the ceremony fare and wide. *(to himself)* Even to Lands of the Night.

End of Prologue. Musician plays transitional music.

RA-EGO *(to the audience)* On the day of the ceremony, friends, neighbors and relatives help out. Delicious smells of cooking fill the air. By trucks, vans, scooters, bicycles and foot, guests pour into our yard. Night falls throbbing with music, which drowns out the city sounds. Big drums, kutum-kutum-kutum-kutum antu-pom

RA-ELI Smaller ones, patap-patap-patap-patap-tururu-

RA-EGO Flutes, tiit-tiit-tiit-tiit-tiit-

BOTH Xylophones, gidi-gidi-gidi-gidi-godo-
gidi-gidi-gidi-gidi-godo-

RA-ELI And singers:
Singers join Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego to sing.

SINGERS *(with Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego)*
Aaae-aaae
aaae-aaae!

RA-ELI My father wanders through the crowd.

RA-EGO He makes sure all have enough to eat and drink. Felt at home and joyful.
Father (Ra-Ego) circulates among guests.

RA-ELI My youngest and favorite aunt – I call her Little Aunt – is in the house helping my mother with Samson.

RA-EGO Samson has grown even worse.

RA-ELI As for me, I'm dressed colorfully and my hair is freshly braided.
Ra-Eli glances in a mirror, as Ra-Eli in the past could have done, to make sure she looks good.

RA-ELI Standing at the gate, I help welcome people into our compound.
Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego peer into the night.

BOTH Darkness brings strange guests.
Musician plays music that heralds arrival of the strange guests.
Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego make impressions of the strange guests they describe.

RA-ELI An old man with ears that reminds me of a hare.

RA-EGO Two shy girls who look like nymphs.

RA-ELI A dancing giant of a man in a mask.

RA-EGO An old woman whose dress shimmers and winks with stars.

RA-ELI My father, stopping, whispers in my ear.
Father (Ra-Ego) speaks to Ra-Eli.

FATHER *(to Ra-Eli)* They come from lands of the night, Ra-Eli. The healer spread word, indeed.
Musician plays music that announces arrival of Angel One

RA-ELI Just then, out of the night appears the strangest guest.

RA-EGO She shakes her head when I welcome her.

RA-ELI She has a message.
Angel One (Ra-Ego) addresses Ra-Eli.

ANGEL ONE *(to Ra-Eli)* It's not for the ceremony that I've come. I've been sent. By Mola.

RA-ELI I stare at the angel.

RA-ELI *(in shock, to Angel One.)* You were sent by ... God?

ANGEL ONE *(to Ra-Eli)* Yes. God – Mola. Mola says your music is too loud. Mola can't rest, can't think. Mola sent me to ask: could you kindly stop?

RA-ELI I tell the angel about Samson, and about the ancestors.

RA-EGO I appeal to her.

RA-ELI *(to Angel One – Ra-Ego)* Would you please be our guest?
Ra-Ego addresses the audience as narrator.

RA-EGO *(to the audience)* The angel hesitates

RA-ELI but, as we all watch, my father most graciously leads the angel to a seat in the yard.

RA-EGO The angel sits politely down, but she's *not smiling*.
Angel One (Ra-Ego) sits down. Ra-Eli peeks at her.

RA-ELI From the crowd, I admire the angel. I like her bangles and earrings. Her neat braids are jet-black and glossy — like mine. I have questions I wish to ask but music, loud and magical, soon fills the night again.
Singers and Musician do the music, together with Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego, who dance to the beat.

kutum-kutum-kutum-kutum antu-pom
patap-patap-patap-patap tururu-
tiit-tiit-tiit-tiit-tiit-
gidi-gidi-gidi-gidi-godo-
aaae-aaae aaaa-aaaa!

RA-EGO *(to the audience)* The angel watches. Listens.
Angel One (Ra-Ego) watches the imaginary crowd.
Ra-Eli watches Angel One (Ra-Ego)
Musician plays ceremonial instrumental music. Music fades into background.
Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego make an impression of Angel One falling under the spell of the music, while they describe her.

Slowly, her fingers begin to drum on her knee, turu...turu. To the music, turu...turu...turu.

RA-ELI She sways her shoulders.

RA-EGO She taps her foot on the ground, kop...kop...kop.

RA-EGO Then she looks up in surprise when dancers approach and ask her to dance.

RA-ELI *Smiling*, she gets to her feet.
Ra-Ego demonstrates Angel One getting to her feet, then narrates.

RA-EGO *(to the audience)* More guests come

RA-ELI followed by another angel! Before I can welcome this second angel, the dancers skip up.

Ra-Eli demonstrates Angel Two dodging the skipping dancers. Ra-Ego does an impression of Angel Two as she describe him, and of his eventual joyful dancing.

RA-EGO The angel pulls back startled but watching the dancers, he's moved to dance too – first in small modest steps, then gradually in bolder motions, more and more joyfully, his long white hair flowing about.

RA-ELI One after another

RA-EGO more angels appear.

RA-ELI One after another

RA-EGO music moves them all to dance. Music sprays into the night, louder than ever.

Singers do the music with Ra-Eli and Ra-Eli, who sway to the beat.

SINGERS *(with Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego)*
Kutum-kutum-kutum-kutum antu-pom
pataap-patap-patap—!

Dramatic explosion of musical sounds announcing Mola (God) interrupts the music.

RA-EGO A burst of light from a lamp brings the ceremony to a stop.

Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego wince from the sharp burst of light. Take cover as they narrate.

RA-ELI The dazzling light turns night into day.

RA-EGO City sounds fade away.

RA-ELI In the complete hush, we blink in awe and astonishment.

Ra-Eli and Ra-Ego blink in the dazzling light.

RA-EGO Then the light dims.

RA-ELI Night creeps back.

RA-EGO Sounds slowly return.

Ra-Eli watches Mola (Ra-Ego) at the gate.

RA-ELI Mola, at the gate, speaks.

Mola (Ra-Ego) addresses the imaginary spread out crowd (the audience) at the ceremony.

MOLA What on earth do you all think you're doing? I have much work and thinking to do, but how can I with your loud music? All I want is some peace, some quiet, to rest, so I can think. Again and again I sent word asking you to stop. I've come to ask you myself.

RA-ELI I inch closer to Mola. I say to Mola