

# **OLADIPO AGBOLUAJE**

## **Mother Courage and Her Children**

**(Scenes 1-3 and 9-12)**

**An adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*, this drama was premiered at Nottingham Playhouse in February 2004 before touring the UK. The production, directed by Josette Bushell-Mingo, starred Carmen Monroe in the title role.**

*EnterText*

*Oga*

*EnterText*

*Sound of a radio playing a popular tune. Drawn by and a mammy-  
wagon rolls in. On it sit and*

*Blocks the way*

*Inspects the wagon*

*Sings*

*EnterText*

*Pulls out a bundle of papers from a tin box and climbs down  
off the wagon*

*EnterText*

*Points to her other children*

*To*

*abi*

*EnterText*

*He writes*



*Gives his helmet to*

*Brings out a bag of cowries. Chants. Throws*

*some into the bushes*

*To*

*Chants*

*hesitates.*

*To*

*Picks the black cowry*



*EnterText*

*Oya*

*Lai-lai<sup>5</sup>*

*Picks up the helmet, chants and shakes it*

*To*

*Gives the helmet*

*chooses the black cowry.*

*Snatches the cowry from*

---

*Contorts face into a smile*

*picks the black cowry Qu'est-ce que Et tu*

*To*

*To*

*Picks for It is the black cowry*

*Empties the cowries back into the bag, returns the helmet to and climbs  
onto the wagon*

*To*

*Falls to the ground, wailing*

*Loudly Shoves forward*

*Climbs down*

*EnterText*

*They go behind the wagon*

*To*

*stands undecided.*

*She gives him some to drink*

*takes and pulls him to the back.*

*is being lured away. makes warning noises, to no avail*

*Holds up the notes to the*

*sun, bites the tip*



*EnterText*

*Laughs sarcastically*

*maybe*

*and enter the tent.*

*EnterText*

*Sits down with*

*EnterText*

*Stuffing the chicken*

*Laughs*

*To*



*EnterText*

*Shows a map*

*Plucks the chicken angrily*

*EnterText*

*sings from the kitchen, banging on a pan.*

*enters the kitchen. Embraces*

*joins them.*

*Slaps*

*and laugh.*

*EnterText*

*Advert*

*EnterText*

*To*

*Embarrassed*





*EnterText*

*Enter and*

*Hisses*

*She gives some money from a purse she  
keeps in the folds of her dress*





*EnterText*

*Sarcastic*

*Laughs*

*cynically*

*is parading around in headtie, imitating her walk. Suddenly, the sound of rocket fire and automatic rifles. Drums. and leap from behind the wagon with their glasses in their hands.*

*Rushes in*

*Runs away*

*Tries to rescue her washing*

*Runs*

*away*

*From afar*

*agbada*

*Gives him an agbada*

*agbada*

*Sees with the headtie*

*Snatches it off head*

*EnterText*

*Tries to take the shoes off feet*

*Goes to the cart*

*Returns, powdering her face*

*To*

*hides the shoes under her*

*wrapper*

*Exits*

*Enter running, with a small box.*

*Enters, her hands filled with ash. To*

*To*



*Eating greedily*



*frightened, runs away, spilling the drink. The two men look at each other and withdraw after seeing*

*He stands up.*  
*tries to alert him to the danger. He shrugs her off*

*He takes the cashbox from the wagon and puts it under his shirt*

*pulls himself away and runs off. She is distraught.*  
*and return. rushes up to her mother.*

*shakes her head and shrugs her shoulders*

*Takes a rebel flag from her basket. attaches it*  
*to the mast*



*Voices in the background. Enter and with as  
their prisoner.*

*EnterText*

*They lead him off*

*Shouts after them*

*She runs after them.*

**Later the same evening. CHAPLAIN and NGOZI wash glasses and polish knives.**

*EnterText*

*Enter*                    *with an old fat Colonel.*

*Hugs*

*Whispers*

*Loud*

*Disappointed*

*EnterText*

*Sharply*

*Takes*      *aside*

*Salutes*

*EnterText*

*To*

*She kisses him. Exit*

*She climbs into the wagon*

*Pulls her down by the wrapper*

*EnterText*

*Oya,*

*Exits*

*help*      *avoids looking at*      *and*      *She sits down to*  
*wash the cutlery.*

*silence.*      *They wash the cutlery in*  
*suddenly runs sobbing behind the wagon*

*runs*  
*off. They sit in silence.*      *stops washing the glasses. The sound of drums in*  
*the distance*

*stands up and goes to the back.*      *remains seated.*  
*It grows dark. The drumming stops. It gets light again.*  
*remains still. Enter*      *distraught.*

*EnterText*

*shakes*

*her head*

*gets who goes to stand beside her mother.*

*holds her hand. Enter two stretcher-bearers with a body.*

*walks beside*

*it. They put down the stretcher.*

*Removes the sheet*

*shakes her head in denial*

*shakes her head again*

**9**

**Two years later. Half the population of West Africa has died. Epidemic kills what is left by the slaughter. In the former flourishing country there is famine. We meet MOTHER COURAGE in the mountains with the Union Army. The harmattan is bitter. Business is very bad. COOK gets a letter from Monrovia and departs.**





*EnterText*

*comes out of the wagon*







*EnterText*

*The wagon, in dire shape, stands near a farmhouse with a huge thatched roof, which is leaning against a mud wall. It is night. Out of the woods appear a sergeant and three soldiers heavily armed.*

*Shouts*

*Hisses*

*Whispers*

*EnterText*

*hand. They copy him* *Covers his mouth with his*

*Points at*

*Grinning*

*To*

*Only one, oh!*

*lands*

*a blow in the stomach with the butt of his rifle.*

*Cries and falls to the ground in pain*

*He goes to the cowshed*

*Weeps*

*To*

*nods*

*Led by \_\_\_\_\_, the soldiers depart.*

*Puts a ladder on the roof and climbs up it*

*Climbs down*



*EnterText*

*gives her a*

*withering look*

*Throughout the prayer is disturbed*

*and possessed by the Holy Spirit flail*

*about and speak in tongues*

*sneaks unnoticed into the wagon and takes something out of it and hides it  
under her wrapper. She climbs up onto the roof of the cowshed. and*

*continue to be in rapture. sits on the roof and beats the*

*Searching for stones*

*stares in the distance and continues drumming.*

*To*

*Enters running*

*Points*

*To*

*keeps on drumming.*

*To*

*Whispers in*

*ear. He consents*

*continues drumming*

*Pushes                   aside*

*Shouts at*

*EnterText*

*drums harder*

*and become mesmerised and start dancing. A glare from  
brings them to their senses*

*Holds runs to get  
drums for himself and for*

*has been listening and drumming less. Worried, she continues, harder.*

*To*

*They follow beat and soon the drumming becomes  
synchronised into a rhythm. understands what they're trying to do and  
changes the rhythm to that of a war tune*



*in tears, keeps drumming. shoots her. beats the drum a  
few more times then falls.*

*At the same time as last beats, cannons from the town fire.*

*Respectfully*

**12**

**Before dawn. The sound of drums and whistles of marching troops.**

*In front of the wagon. is crouched over The farm  
people are standing beside her.*

*Hostile*

*Sings*





