

# The Story So Far: Plot Summaries of *The Brother/Sister Plays*

*Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet* is part three of a series of stories called *The Brother/Sister Plays*. You might find it helpful to read these summaries as the shows are interconnected, but know that there are spoilers!

## In The Red and Brown Water

Oya is fast runner—beautiful to watch on the track, and on the verge of womanhood. The neighbor boy Elegba warns her mother that he has been having vivid dreams about her floating in water, bleeding. At her track meet, Oya meets the Man from State, who offers her a scholarship. She asks for the chance to go discuss it with her mother, Mama Moja.

At home, Oya is visited by kind, stuttering Ogun, who seems to have a crush on her, but the arrival of another man, smooth, sexy Shango, sends him off. Mama Moja does not approve of Shango for her daughter and chases him away. Mama Moja is feeling that her time is short, so she is reluctant to let her daughter take the scholarship. Oya passes on the scholarship to stay with her Mama, who dies.

Shango comes to offer his condolences, and with no Mama Moja to chase him off, he stays. Shango's relationship with Oya is tempestuous. When Ogun's aunt/Oya's godmother Elegua visits she reminds Oya that education should come first. But the scholarship isn't available any more. Shango joins the army and leaves. Ogun returns to Oya, offering her his love and one day, a family. She accepts and he moves in.

Some time in to their relationship, Oya watches a neighborhood baby shower with a sense of longing. Elegba visits to tell her he has gotten a woman pregnant. Shango returns on leave and remarks on how strange it is that Oya isn't pregnant yet. He asks what she's doing with Ogun, and they begin an affair. Shango leaves: he tried to help Oya get pregnant, but it didn't work.

Oya visits *The Woman Who Reminds You* looking for answers and help with her fertility, but *The Woman* cannot help her. Oya becomes increasingly withdrawn. She tells Ogun to go find someone who can love him better.

At a party, Oya sees Elegba with his friend *The Egungun*. Their "friendship" is clearly more than just a friendship, and Oya asks Elegba if he's a "grey boy" (gay). He demurs, and tells her that Shango is home. Beautiful, mean Shun stops by to let Oya know that she is pregnant with Shango's baby.

Shango arrives, and Oya goes in the house to get him a present. She returns, bleeding, to give him her ear. As the epilogue says—she wasn't crazy, just sad.

## The Brothers Size

Oshoosi Size is just out of prison and on parole. He lives with his older brother, the mechanic Ogun. Ogun, annoyed that Oshoosi is unemployed, hires him to work at his car shop, where Oshoosi's close friend from prison Elegba visits Oshoosi at work. Oshoosi complains to Elegba that Ogun asks him about prison all the time. Ogun enters and bristles when Elegba refers to Oshoosi as his (Elegba's) brother, and suggests Elegba leave. Elegba does. When Oshoosi takes Elegba's offered hand they have a brief physical connection.

Later, Oshoosi complains to Ogun that he needs a woman. He asks Ogun about whatever happened to Oya—Ogun explains (see *In the Red and Brown Water*).

In Oshoosi's dream, Ogun works, and Elegba visits Oshoosi, singing and reminding him of the danger of "those late nights" in prison, when Elegba would comfort him as he called for Ogun. Oshoosi wakes from the nightmare. Ogun has left without him, and he is late for work. Ogun fires him. Elegba arrives, pushing a car, a gift for Oshoosi.

Ogun dreams that Oshoosi and Elegba are bound together. Elegba does not want to leave, Oshoosi is confused, and Ogun wants to help him, but the dream ends.

At home, Ogun and Oshoosi talk about work—Oshoosi admires how Ogun enjoys his work, but wonders how he will find something he enjoys like that. He reveals that he has been smoking pot. Elegba honks for him, and Oshoosi goes with him.

Continued

## The Story So Far: Continued

The next morning Elegba calls at Oshoosi's window. Oshoosi is asleep and Ogun asks him what he has to tell him. Elegba won't reveal it, but he does tell Ogun about Oshoosi weeping for him in prison, and while pointing out Ogun's failures as a brother, acknowledges that he can not be a brother to Oshoosi like Ogun is. He also warns Ogun that the law might be coming around.

Ogun, angry and frustrated, screams at Oshoosi for his screw ups, in this case, being caught in a car with a pound of powder. Oshoosi tells the whole story—driving to the bayou with Elegba to visit a woman, stopping while Elegba sang to him, the arrival of the law. Oshoosi says that in the moment the police arrived he saw Elegba mentally return to prison, and Oshoosi realized he couldn't go back, so he ran. The brothers reminisce about their childhood, and sing together. Oshoosi sees Elegba in the window and the singing and warmth stop. He goes to bed.

Ogun wakes Oshoosi, and orders him to go—to run away. He gives him money and his truck, and tells him he will “deny him” three times to the law. Ogun wants to know he still has a brother, out there somewhere.

### Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet

Marcus is sixteen, the baby Elegba fathered in *In the Red and Brown Water*. He has been having strange dreams in which he is visited by Oshoosi Size (though he doesn't know who he is).

Marcus and his best female friends, Shaunta and Osha, attend the funeral of Osha's father, Shango, killed in the war in Iraq. Marcus begins to tell his friends about his dream, but they are interrupted by Osha's mother, Shun, who doesn't like Osha hanging out with “sweet” Marcus. Shun says he is just like his dead daddy. Marcus is a little stunned. Shaunta reassures him and then asks him if he is “sweet” (gay). She knows that Osha wanted more than friendship from Marcus, but he should be able to tell Shaunta, since she's just a friend. Marcus ducks the question, but admits that he wakes from his dreams, missing his father, who he doesn't even remember or see in the dreams.

Elegua, now near 70, runs in to Marcus and complains about Ogun's reaction to Shango's death. She says he hasn't taken anything this hard since Oshoosi left. This is the first Marcus has heard of Oshoosi. He asks Elegua for more information, but she doesn't have the patience to tell him more than that he liked women enough to father Marcus, and refuses to elaborate. Marcus then tells her he's been having dreams. She says his father did that too. He tells her his dream: there is a man in the rain telling him things, but when he wakes up he can't remember what he told him. The man does not seduce him, although when Elegua questions him, Marcus admits that maybe he wants him to.

Ogun finds Marcus, and admits that he reminds him of Oshoosi and Elegba, in the way he feels everything. He tells Marcus stories about Oshoosi and Elegba. Marcus and Ogun cry together and smile. Marcus kisses Ogun. Shaunta and Osha (and their classmate Terell) find them, and Terell claims they were kissing. Marcus admits that he kissed Ogun (who claims to be too old to be gay). Osha is very angry that Marcus didn't tell her that he is gay. Osha leaves, and Terell and Shaunta follow him. Marcus tells Ogun his dream.

Days later Marcus encounters Shua, a smooth, good-looking guy, who tells Marcus he has pretty eyes and asks if he gets down with dudes. Marcus tells him to meet him on the bayou. They meet and have an uncomfortable chat. Then Shua “pull Marcus' head down toward his lap.”

Shun warns Osha not to spend too much time with her new guy, and points out that she warned her about Marcus.

Marcus and Osha make up. Then Shua arrives, and when they both know him... oops. Marcus realizes this is Osha's new romantic interest. Shua indicates that Marcus should keep quiet. He does.

Shua finds Marcus and suggests they keep a sexual relationship on the side. Marcus and Osha make up, but she exits. Marcus exits like he heard a ghost.

Marcus goes to Elegua's house, but she has left to avoid the coming storm. Ogun is there and Marcus tells him about his new dream about his brother, in which Oshoosi tells Marcus to “tell my brother...” Ogun marches in a funeral procession by himself. Marcus watches him to make sure he gets home safe.