

Music for Schools presents...

ANIMAL Rumble Grumble

== an AFRICAN tale ==
by Brendon Renwick

Full of intrigue and animal antics !

ANIMAL Rumble Grumble is a 35+ minute musical play for ages 5 to 9, making it ideal for whole-school performance by infant, primary and first schools. This colourful, atmospheric show takes inspiration from a traditional Kenyan folktale. The animals of the plain are fearful of a strange distant rumbling. *“Something terrible is coming this way ! It will destroy us and take over our plains.”* The animals quickly seek the advice of Ghubari, a wise old man who lives at the top of the umbrella thorn tree. But his wise and cryptic words confuse them. In turn, the animals find enough courage to go and confront the terrible danger that gets ever closer.

Simple script with catchy songs.

ANIMAL Rumble Grumble flows around 8 catchy songs, 2 dances and some simple dialogue, for your more confident speakers, although the songs form the majority of the content. It can involve small or large groups of children as the animal characters - in fact a cast-size of your choice. The songs and script are easy-to-learn (see list of main parts over the page) and this e-booklet provides full script, lyrics and staging notes to help direct your performers.

What are the MP3 files?

The downloadable mp3 files provide you with all the musical material with fully sung performances to facilitate children's learning of each song; also, the musical backing with no singing support. For those teachers who also like to refer to musical notation when teaching/learning songs, an optional e-booklet (pdf file) of sheet music is also available (see our website for sample pages), which is presented in a two-stave, simplified format including the chord names above (for guitar or keyboard accompaniment) and full songs lyrics beneath the melody line.

Staging, Costumes and Scenery

Simple stage directions are given throughout. It is a good idea to have your performers close to the performance area, seated on benches either side so they are ready to move into place when required. Also, this helps your audience to observe them when not on stage. If not a main character, any other children can contribute to the singing throughout the show, perhaps seated on the floor, or on other benches pointing diagonally out from each side of the performance area.

Costumes for the animals, at their simplest, could be limited to headbands and coloured t-shirts for each character group, although more elaborate costumes could be explored using different animal print fabrics. Avoid using masks, as this will inhibit singing, but face painting could be a very effective way of capturing some animal characteristics. For the 'wind dancers', whites and blues could be emphasised with the use of long flowing lightweight fabrics or scarves. Long ribbons on sticks could also be used, swirled around in circles and zigzags to represent the wind. Both Ghubari and the musicians (African drummers) could be tribally dressed, or in matching t-shirts in yellows, browns or oranges. For the stage hands, plain black clothing would help them to be less visible, to focus attention on their colourful sheets. The stage hands are required to grip large fabric sheets and to flutter them vertically or horizontally around the stage (see script for details).

During the show, Ghubari is positioned 'at the top of the Seretuet tree' (an 'umbrella thorn' or 'flat-top acacia' tree), which can be simulated by using a partially raised area (stage blocks) at the back, decorated with leaves and branches. At at point near the end of the show, Ghubari needs to step down from the tree.

Technology

If your school has a video projector and large suspended projection screen, this could be used imaginatively to show various 'African plain' scenes throughout the show. Also, ensure that the person operating the CD player brings each track in promptly, using the pause button between tracks to avoid unnecessary waiting.

Speaking Parts

- **Narrators** (*up to 14 narrators, but can be fewer if each take more than one turn*)
- **Monkey 1** + **Monkey 2**
- **Giraffe 1** + **Giraffe 2**
- **Elephant 1** + **Elephant 2**
- **Zebra 1** + **Zebra 2**
- **Lion 1** + **Lion 2**
- **Ghubari** (a wise old man: pronounced 'ghoo-BAH-ree', a Swahili boy's name meaning 'rain cloud')

Non-speaking Parts

These can be any number, but at least 3 or 4 of each part would help make a good sized animal group on stage:

- **Monkeys**
- **Giraffes**
- **Elephants**
- **Zebra**
- **Lions**
- **Wind Dancers**
- **African drummers**
(any number, using hand drums or other low, beaten drums)
- **Stage hands**
(in pairs, whose job it is to flap and flutter large fabric sheets on stage)

SONG Nyonei Ropta !
CD track 2

(ALL performers stand and turn to audience to sing.)

(all sing)

Can you hear it ? Nyonei Ropta.
Rumbling, grumbling, heavy like drums.
Can you see it ? Nyonei Ropta.
Better watch out now, here it comes.

Animals tremble and animals shake,
from the mighty lion to the venomous snake.
On the plains always watch your back.
Look for danger and cover your tracks.

<i>(group 1 - shouted)</i>	Rumbling, grumbling.
<i>(group 2 - shouted)</i>	Nyonei Ropta.
<i>(group 1)</i>	Tall and towering.
<i>(group 2)</i>	Nyonei Ropta.
<i>(group 1)</i>	Strong and mighty.
<i>(group 2)</i>	Nyonei Ropta.
<i>(group 1)</i>	Heavy like drums.
<i>(group 2)</i>	Here it comes !

(8 bar instrumental, during which performers dance around the stage)

Narrator 5

The animals arrived at the foot of the 'Seretuet' tree, which stood tall and alone on the African plain. 'Seretuet' is the Kinandi word for 'umbrella thorn tree'. It was the home of Ghubari, a wise old man who had lived for many years at the top of the tree. The animals looked up and called out...

All the animals

Ghubari, ghubari, wake up !

Monkeys

We need your help.

Zebra

Something terrible is coming this way !

Elephants

It will destroy us and take over our plains !

Giraffes

The wind told us - it spoke to us.

Lions

It said, "**Nyonei Ropta**" .

(Ghubari slowly wakes up. He stretches and slowly stands tall amongst the leaves and branches, first looking down at the animals, then up to the sky, breathing in long and hard, before speaking calmly to the animals.)

Ghubari

'Nyonei Ropta' you say...

I have lived for many years and seen many things, many changes.

'Nyonei Ropta' you say...

Animals, you are right. Nyonei Ropta will change everything !

All the animals *(agitated, worried, shouted)*

But what is it ?

Sound Effect : distant thundery drums

(Just before the song ends, the off-stage musicians begin beating their drums again, along with the thunder-like sounds. The zebras all leave the stage, as the wind dancers briefly dance and rotate across the stage area in front of the Ghubari and the other gathered animals. The drums get eventually get quieter, fading away before the animals speak.)

Monkey 1

It rumbled again.

Monkey 2

It grumbled again.

Lion 1

It is getting louder.

Lion 2

It seems closer than before.

All the animals *(agitated, worried, shouted)*

What shall we do Ghubari ?

Narrator 7

Ghubari opened his eyes and again stood tall and stretched his arms out, reaching for the sky.

(Ghubari slowly stands and stretches tall, reaching for the sky, but again his arms begin to shake vigorously and his voice speaks loudly, sounding afraid.)

Ghubari *(now shouting and sounding fearful)*

Indeed it is coming closer. '**Nyonei Ropta**'. It is strong and mighty. It will soon be here.

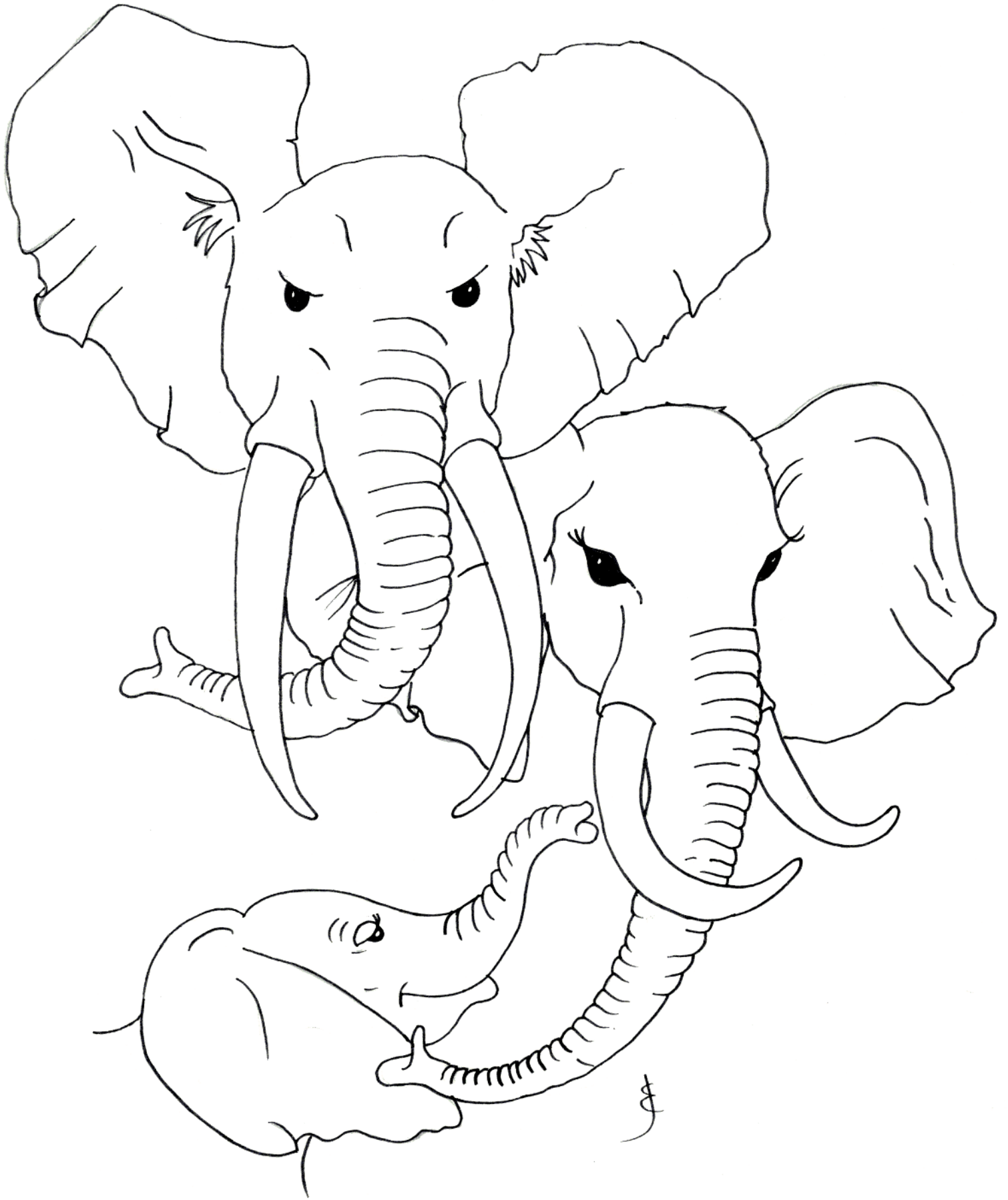
All the animals *(shouting in fear)* Aaahh !

(The biggest elephant steps forward, now looking bold and sounding brave.)

Elephant 1

But we must not be afraid. We are the strongest animals, much stronger than the zebra. We will go and push it aside.

All the animals *(surprised, with a sharp intake of breath)* Huh ?



Strong and mighty.

(The rest of the elephant group also steps forward to stand with Elephant 1, all now looking bold and brave. As their song starts they position themselves firmly in a line, centre-stage, ready to sing and clunk their feet. All the other animals sit to watch. Ghubari returns to his seated position and closes his eyes, as if meditating.)

***SONG* Move Aside !**
CD track 5

(Elephant group sings , or can be sung by ALL)

Move aside, 'cos the elephant's here.
Very wide with two big ears,
tiny eyes but one enormous trunk.
Four mighty feet going
clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk.

Elephants live in family groups,
take care of all their troops.
Elephants walk in single file,
but I bet you've never seen one smile.

- ***REPEAT all through again, then...***

Sound Effect : distant thundery drums

(Just before the song ends, the off-stage musicians begin beating their drums again, along with the thunder-like sounds. The lions roar loudly as they leave the performance area. The giraffes and monkeys return to the stage, fearful of both the lions and the drums. The drums soon get quieter, and fade away before the animals speak.)

Monkey 1

Loud rumbling.

Monkey 2

Loud grumbling.

Giraffe 1

It is much louder than before.

Giraffe 2

Much closer than before.

(Ghubari slowly stands and stretches tall, reaching for the sky, but again his arms begin to shake vigorously and his voice speaks loudly, sounding afraid.)

Ghubari *(shouting, sounding fearful)*

'**Nyonei Ropta**'. It will fill the sky. It will tower above us !

All the animals *(shouting in fear)* Aaahh !

(The tallest giraffe steps forward, now looking bold and sounding brave.)

Giraffe 1

But **we** are the tallest - **we** tower above all the other animals, and although we are afraid, we are much calmer than the lions and the monkeys - so **we** will go and search it out !

Monkeys *(surprised, with a sharp intake of breath)* Huh ?

(The rest of the giraffe group also steps forward to stand with Giraffe 1, all now looking calm and brave. As their song starts they walk gracefully forward to sing. The monkeys dash to new hiding places, peeking out to watch the giraffes. Ghubari returns to his seated position and closes his eyes, as if meditating.)

Sound Effect : distant thunder drums

(The distant thunder drums get louder and louder, as the musicians now move into the performance area. They circle the group of animals, which huddle closer together in fear. The stage hands flutter their grey sheets more vigorously, maybe moving around the performance area too (if practical). Ghubari stands taller still, now smiling and stretching his arms again towards the sky with his long spear in one hand. The musicians continue to play until the start of the 'Rain Dance' music is heard.)

Ghubari *(shouting with happiness)*

'Nyonei Ropta' ! It is here, it is here !

All the animals *(shouting in fear)* **Aaahh !**

Ghubari *(shouting with happiness)*

Animals - there is nothing to fear. You must trust me. I may be old, but I am wise. **'Nyonei Ropta'** is our friend. **'Nyonei Ropta'** has come to save us ! I am filled with happiness and soon... you will be happy too.

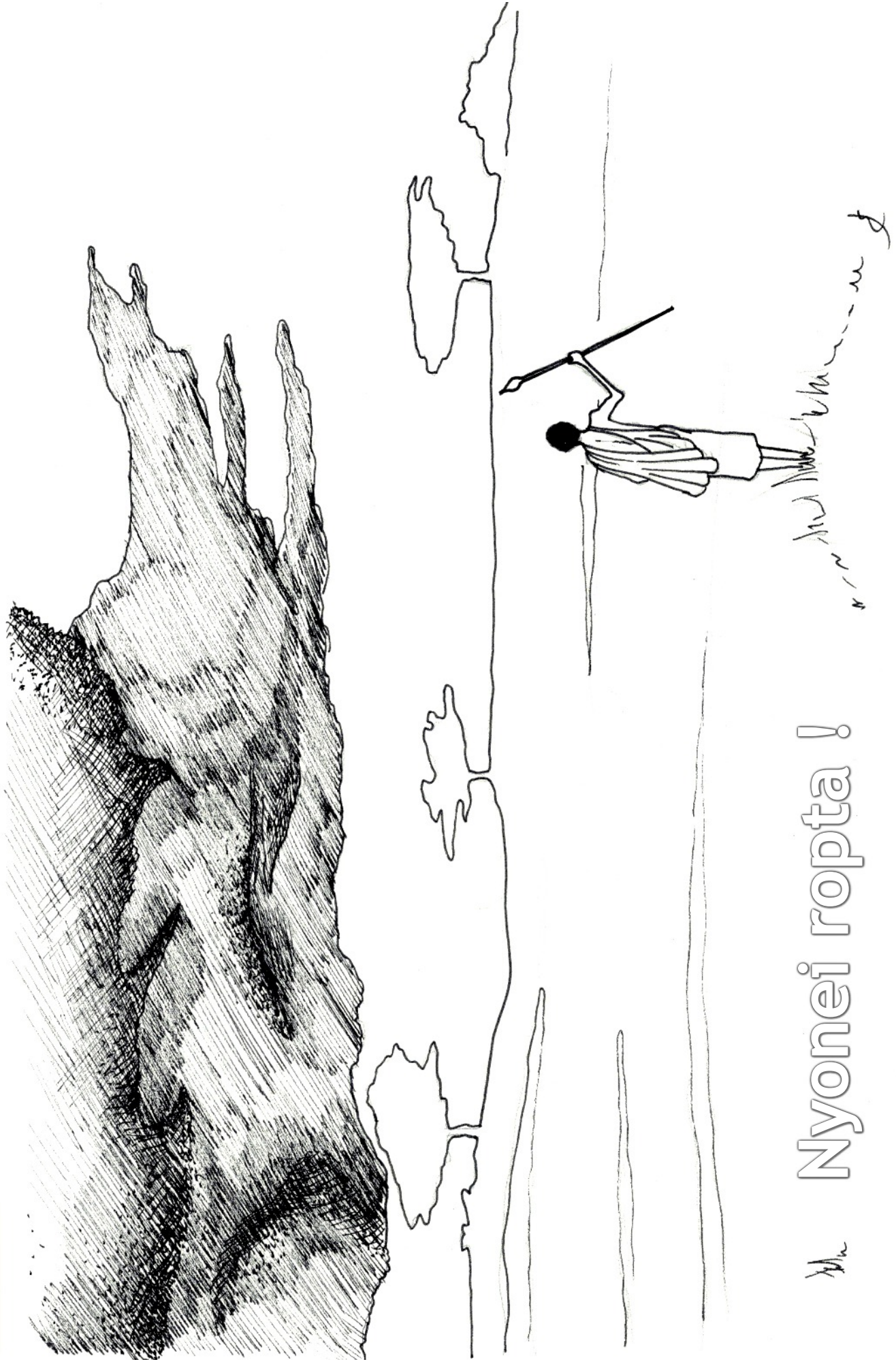
Narrator 13

Ghubari balanced his spear, took aim towards the sky, then launched his spear into the dark, heavy rain clouds.

(In slow motion, Ghubari simulates the dramatic throwing of his spear, at which point the gathered animals, lean backwards, outwards and upwards, with worried faces, following the course of the imaginary thrown spear.)

All the animals *(surprised, with a sharp intake of breath)* **Huh !**

(As the spear comes to a sudden halt in the air, the drumming musicians suddenly STOP.)



M. Nyonei ropta !