

# dancing with angels

## synopsis

The actors explain that they are going to tell a story - nothing more, nothing less. The story will be about a boy who dances the stories of his nation's history.

Mother sits singing to the baby boy; then we see the boy as a child; finally as a young man. We meet the boy's father who asks him to pick a card. The boy chooses Lady Luck.

We meet the boy's brother who has a watch. They play at being in space, looking for angels. The boy is sent to war to encourage the soldiers through his dancing. His brother is also sent to war - as a soldier.

In the middle of battle the boy forgets the dance and his brother is shot and dies. An angel appears.

The boy asks how he can re-learn the dances. He decides that his mother will be able to teach him - and also will be able to tell him why the soldiers are fighting.

The angel says that in order to re-learn the dances the boy must accept every gift that he is offered and that he must kill the giver of each gift. The boy proposes that since this is only a story it is all right to kill. The angel asks him if he is sure it is only a story.

The boy sets out on his journey.

The boy is attacked by a soldier. The soldier has the boy's brother's watch - which has stopped. The soldier tells the boy that his brother died when he forgot the dance. The boy asks the soldier why he fought them, because they had come to give him freedom. The soldier replies that the freedom to dance the dances of the victor was not for him. The soldier gives the boy the watch. The boy kills the soldier.

Next the boy meets an old woman digging in the rubble. She steals his watch. They discover ancient cultural artefacts buried in the rubble. She hides them under her shawl. Then he discovers the Mask of the Gods. She is frightened by the mask and its power. She gives him the mask to take away. He kills her.

He discovers the watch the Old Woman had stolen from him. And he continues his journey. He meets an Entrepreneur. The Entrepreneur wants him to invent new stories to create a new culture for the land that has been devastated by war. He also has plans to breed locusts to use as a Weapon of Mass Destruction. The boy tries to refuse but the Entrepreneur makes him dance. The Mask of the Gods falls to the ground. The Entrepreneur recognises that if he puts on the Mask then he can rule the world. But he makes the boy put on the Mask so that he won't be in the line of fire. The Entrepreneur expects to be able to control the boy but the Mask makes the boy powerful and aggressive. He kills the Entrepreneur by setting the locusts on him.

Next the boy is accosted by a Young Woman. The Young Woman tries to seduce him into taking her across the border - as his wife or girl friend. But the boy discovers her baby hidden in the suitcase. The young Woman gives the boy her baby so that the baby might have a better life. The boy kills the Young Woman.

As happens after every death, the angel asks him what he is now going to do. The boy questions why he is doing what he is doing but is still determined that he needs to get back to his mother in

order to find out why - why they' re fighting, why they've done what they've done to the country: "There are so many whys I need to know".

Father appears. The boy asks for his help in getting across the border. Father says he will have to pay and offers to take the baby as payment (knowing that he can sell the baby to a childless couple). The boy at first refuses but then agrees to play a game of cards that will determine whether father takes him across the border for free or whether father gets the baby. The boy loses the baby. Father disguises the boy as a woman. The sight of his son dressed as a woman reminds father of his young days with the boy's mother. He regrets what he has become. But still considers setting his son up in a brothel. The boy reminds his father that he must get across the border.

Once across the border the father insists on giving the boy his blessing. So the boy kills his father.

The boy's dead brother appears. He tells the boy that it was a bullet that killed him and that it wasn't the boy's fault. He takes back his watch.

The boy finally meets his mother. He recounts his journey to get there - including all the killing. He asks his mother for enlightenment. She hits him hard.

The boy says he will never dance again. The angel tells him he has his own dance to dance, his own story to tell. She makes him re-enact his journey.

He asks why his story contains so much killing. She asks him whether he ever chose - having explained that the people who gave him the gifts each chose to do so. He says he didn't know he could choose. She makes it clear to him that we always have a choice.

She says it's time to fly. He chooses to bring the baby. They fly up into space.

The boy sees a tiny world below him full of strangers huddled together. He asks if he can go back. She says it is his choice. He chooses to go back with the baby. And he promises the baby that from now on he will choose carefully.