

Jericho

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOTEL FRONT, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Torrential downpour engulfs a dilapidated motel. Pieces of siding are missing. Wooden planks barricade broken windows. Several inches of rain flood the parking lot.

In front of the motel, a sign reads "THE RAHAB MOTEL." A strong gust of wind topples the sign and it crumbles into pieces. The encompassing wind carries away the debris.

All of the rooms are vacant except for one. Its curtains barely conceal the light from inside.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JOSHUA (50's) sits on a twin sized bed and reads a Gideon Bible. His clergy suit just barely conceals his lanky figure. His thick glasses magnify his kind eyes. His skin is blacker than black.

Hymnal music plays in the background.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Joshua peers away from his Bible and gazes at the front door. KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Joshua sets his Bible face down on a nearby nightstand and gets up from the bed. He walks to the window and peaks through the curtains. He SIGHS.

Joshua opens the door. The chain lock prevents him from opening it fully.

Outside his door stands a black prostitute named ABABUO (18). Sopping wet rags adorn her body. She wears plastic bags as shoes.

JOSHUA
(in a thick African accent)
What is it?

ABABUO
Please sir, may I come inside?

JOSHUA
I am sorry. But you must go.

(CONTINUED)

ABABUO

But sir, there is no where for me to go.

JOSHUA

You cannot stay here. For you are a harlet and I am-

ABABUO

A servant of the Lord. Please, gaze upon me and search your heart.

Ababuo turns her other cheek. The left side of her face is pink and severely scarred. Chunks of flesh are missing, including her ear. Her left eyeball is completely white.

ABABUO

In the name of the Father and the Son and the-

JOSHUA

Okay. Okay. But you cannot stay over night.

LATER

Ababuo sits on a chair near the window. She's wrapped in a plethora of blankets.

Joshua enters the room with two mugs of coffee in hand. He gives one to Ababuo and returns to his spot on the bed.

Ababuo notices the Bible on the nightstand.

ABABUO

What are you reading?

JOSHUA

The Bible.

ABABUO

I mean, what are you reading specifically, within the Bible?

JOSHUA

The story of Jericho. Are you familiar with it?

ABABUO

No.

Ababuo sips her coffee.

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA

The city of Jericho was a godless city, full of Canaanites. One day the Lord instructed his people to destroy it. However the city of Jericho was surrounded by several large walls.

ABABUO

Then how did they overtake it?

JOSHUA

For seven days the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho. On the seventh day, the Lord instructed them to blow their ram's horns seven times. And on the seventh blow the walls came tumbling down.

ABABUO

And then what happened?

JOSHUA

God's people stormed the city and killed everyone inside.

ABABUO

The women and the children too?

JOSHUA

The women and the children too.

ABABUO

Does that explain this weather? Is this our judgement?

Joshua LAUGHS.

JOSHUA

No. This is more like Noah and the arc.

ABABUO

Where are you from? Your accent. It's not from around here.

JOSHUA

Nigeria.

ABABUO

Nigeria? Why didn't you return home before the storm arrived?

(CONTINUED)

Ababuo gulps her coffee.

JOSHUA

I made a commitment to the Lord. I promised him that I would travel to the Americas and save these people. To save our people.

JOSHUA

What about you? Are you from around here?

ABABUO

Born and raised.

JOSHUA

So why didn't you leave?

ABABUO

I have no where to go. My family abandoned me. I have no friends. There is work to be done here. So I might as well stay here.

JOSHUA

Even in a time like this?

Ababuo holds up an empty mug.

ABABUO

Do you mind?

JOSHUA

Not at all.

Ababuo gets up and walks to the electric coffee pot. She retrieves the pot and approaches Joshua.

ABABUO

Would you like a refill?

JOSHUA

No thank you. If I have any more I won't be able to fall asleep.

ABABUO

Don't worry. You'll be asleep sooner than you think.

JOSHUA

What?

Ababuo raises the half full coffee pot high into the air. She swings it with all of her might and smashes it into Joshua's face. Glass shatter. Coffee SIZZLES. Joshua falls over, completely unconscious.

LATER

Joshua opens his eyes. He's surrounded by darkness. The room is silent except for the PATTERN of rain and the HOWLING of wind outside.

Joshua tries to move but he's been restrained. Rope binds him to a chair.

JOSHUA

Hello?

No answer.

JOSHUA

Is anybody there?

Only the wind answers.

JOSHUA

Please! Somebody! I need help!

A flashlight turns on, revealing Ababuo's scarred face just inches away from Joshua's face. She stares back at him, emotionless and cold.

Joshua breathes a SIGH of relief.

ABABUO

Where is he?

JOSHUA

Excuse me?

ABABUO

The inyanga of Eket. Where is he?

Joshua SCOFFS.

JOSHUA

I have no idea what you are talking about.

ABABUO

You don't remember me. Do you?

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA

Perhaps you didn't understand me when I said that I have no idea what you are talking about.

Ababuo stands up and paces the room in front of Joshua.

ABABUO

A family of three reside in the small town of Eket. There is a mother, a father, and an eight year old daughter. One day, tragedy strikes the family and the mother dies from a terrible fever. The father could not find reason in his wife's death. He wanted answers. Needed answers. So he went to our local priest. He begged and pleaded with the priest. "Dear Father," he asked, "why would a loving God take away my one true love?" And you know what the priest said in response?

JOSHUA

Enlighten me.

ABABUO

Your daughter. Your eight year old daughter is the cause of all this. She killed your wife. Killed her mother. Through witch craft. That's right, your eight year old daughter is a witch.

Joshua squirms.

JOSHUA

Free me from this chair. I demand you to.

ABABUO

Be patient. The story's not over yet. So the father hands over his daughter to the priest. For a deliverance, he says. Which of course, costs the man deeply. But we won't go into specifics. So the priest gathers some elders to deliver the daughter from witch craft. Out of curiosity, do you know how they rid eight year old girls of witch craft in the small town of Eket?

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA

I said let me go!

ABABUO

They pour acid on their face and exile them.

JOSHUA

This is preposterous. How dare you. I let you into my room to keep you safe and this is how you repay me? With lies and false accusations?

Ababuo gets in Joshua's face and shines the light on the good side of her face.

ABABUO

Do you remember me now Father Joshua? About ten years have passed. Look into my good eye. Erase the scars and go back in time. Can you picture the faces of your countless victims?

Joshua's grow as wide as dinner plates.

JOSHUA

Ababuo.

ABABUO

The child who returns.

JOSHUA

But how did you survive?

ABABUO

After you left me for dead outside the city walls, the inyanga found me. He took me in and took care of me as though I was his own. He performed white magic in order to save my life. Of course, there were consequences.

JOSHUA

You let the devil save you? Foolish child! You'll be damned for all eternity.

ABABUO

You foolish man. The inyanga's magic made me stronger. Gave me a power unknown to any man. Where as

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ABABUO (cont'd)
your eyes see only this moment, my
left eye sees the past, present,
and the future, all at once.

JOSHUA
Is that how you found me? With your
deformed eye?

ABABUO
I know you kidnapped the inyanga
and took him to the Americas. I saw
glimpses of it. So I followed the
glimpses to this place. To this
motel. And that's where my visions
stop.

JOSHUA
If you want to know where the
inyanga is, why don't you just tell
me yourself?

ABABUO
Because my vision has become
cloudy. I don't know why or how.
But I plan on finding out. By any
means necessary.

Ababuo produces a rusty knife from beneath her ragged
clothes.

ABABUO
I am not here for revenge. That
would be unchristian like. I am
here to save the man who saved me.
Tell me where he is and I'll be on
my way.

Joshua starts to laugh. It begins as a CHUCKLE and quickly
evolves into a full belly LAUGH.

JOSHUA
If you must know, the inyanga is in
the bathroom. Taking a bath.

Ababuo stares at Joshua suspiciously.

JOSHUA
Seriously. Go see for yourself. I'm
not going anywhere.

Ababuo walks towards the closed bathroom door. She uses the
flashlight to guide her path.

(CONTINUED)

She jiggles the handle. It's locked.

JOSHUA

You might need to break the lock.
The inyanga locked himself in there
hours ago. He likes his privacy.

Ababuo BANGS on the door. The door doesn't budge.

She then checks the door. Still doesn't open.

Ababuo takes a step back. She kicks the door with all of her
might. The lock breaks and the door flies wide open.

Ababuo shines the flashlight into the bathroom. She GASPS in
sheer horror.

The INYANGA (50) lays dead in a bathtub. There's a wide gash
in his neck. Blood scales the walls, floor, and even the
ceiling. Flies BUZZ around the inyanga's naked corpse.

JOSHUA

Can you see clearly now?

Ababuo storms over to Joshua and holds the knife to his
throat.

ABABUO

Why god damn it? Why did you do it?

Joshua CHUCKLES.

JOSHUA

Because I am a servant of the lord.
And a man of god cannot employ the
devil's handiwork.

ABABUO

Devil's handwork? His magic was not
black. He only used white magic.
Magic that saved my life.

JOSHUA

Foolish girl. Witch craft is witch
craft.

ABABUO

The inyanga was a good man. He
would never harm anyone. Which is
more than I can say for you.

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA

If that were true, then why did he
cast black magic upon this city?

Ababuo releases Joshua from her grips.

ABABUO

What are you talking about?

JOSHUA

The rain, the thunder, the
lightning. All of it was conjured
by the inyanga.

ABABUO

He would never do such a
thing...intentionally.

A lightbulb goes off in Ababuo's head.

ABABUO

That's why you kidnapped him. You
needed him for his magic. But you
did not know the magic yourself. So
you kidnapped him, took him to the
Americas, and forced him to cast
magic against his will. But how?

JOSHUA

He kept telling me that someone was
coming to save him. Someone close
to him. He didn't tell me who. He
just said someone was following us.
He made me promise that I would not
harm that person. He told me that
whoever was after us, meant me no
harm. He or she simply wanted to
save him.

ABABUO

And what if the inyanga was wrong?
What if I stab you in the throat
right now?

Ababuo points the rusty blade towards Joshua's adam's apple.

JOSHUA

Then I'll become a martyr. The
ultimate reward for the ultimate
sacrifice.

Thunder BOOMS outside.

(CONTINUED)

ABABUO

How do I stop it?

JOSHUA

What's done is done. There is no stopping it.

ABABUO

Why? Why would you cast a spell on a city you know nothing about?

JOSHUA

Because it's my Jericho.

ABABUO

You are delusional.

JOSHUA

Am I? Open your good eye and see this place for what it really is. The alcohol runs rampant, women sell sex in the streets, godlessness is everywhere.

ABABUO

What about the children? Do they deserve the fate of their fathers?

JOSHUA

In order to rebuild, one must destroy. It is the only way I can save our people.

A SIREN blasts seven times. Ababuo looks around in fear. Joshua counts the horns and smiles.

JOSHUA

Seven siren blasts. Just like the seven calls from the ram's horn.

ABABUO

Then what happens? Do the walls come tumbling down?

JOSHUA

Worse. The levees break. I have reclaimed New Orleans for the lord.

Ababuo walks behind Joshua.

ABABUO

The inyanga was right.

(CONTINUED)

Ababuo flips Joshua's chair forward. Both Joshua and the chair topple to the ground.

Ababuo walks to the front door.

ABABUO
I wouldn't kill you.

Ababuo opens the front door. Several inches of rain rush in.

ABABUO
But I won't save you either.

Ababuo exits through the front door and into the storm outside.

FADE OUT.