

"CYCLES"

By

Adeayo Sangowawa

FADE IN:

EXT. ANGLICAN CHURCH - DAY

A middle-aged priest kneels at the altar. He is praying. Heeled legs walk through the pews and stop a few feet behind him. He opens his eyes. Distracted.

ANNA

Hello dad.

The priest rises in shock to face the woman. He eyes her appearance. ANNA, 22, stands facing him, dressed in a skimpy dress exposing majority of her form. Her face is heavy with makeup. Her hair so long it reaches her butt.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Why so stunned?

(checks her appearance)

Is it my skimpy clothes...my pierced nose or my make up?

(gasps sarcastically)

Oh wait! You don't know me... But you do know Ize...right?

The priest opens his mouth as though to speak.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You promised to marry her and ran away when you discovered she was pregnant. And now you are here...hiding in your sanctuary, behind your priestly title and fancy robe while my mother sacrificed it all till her final breath. I gave my body so I could pay her medical bills for years. On her death bed she revealed the identity of my father and after a year of searching, I find you. Tell me...did you look for me? For 22 whole years! Did you even care? Or did they not teach you in seminary that with repentance comes atonement?

John trembles.

JOHN

Child...

ANNA

Don't call me that.

JOHN

Please...

(looks around)

Let's go somewhere private and talk or at least sit.

ANNA

And why should I sit or talk with you?
What kind of man abandons the woman he loves and his unborn child?

JOHN

I never knew Ize was pregnant and I did love her.

ANNA

You lie!

JOHN

I swear!

(catches himself)

I'm sorry. I was in a lot of trouble. I wasn't a good person back then and I was running away from the police. That was why I left not because I was afraid to face your mother. I didn't know she was pregnant.

ANNA

And if you did would you have stayed?

JOHN

I...I don't know...

Anna chuckles unbelievably.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I was irresponsible and immature, and I would still not have been able to give your mother the life she deserved.

ANNA

But at least you would have been there!

(a tear rolls down her cheek)

She suffered alone! We suffered. How do you think we were able to survive all these years? I had to make sacrifices that I would live to regret the rest of my life. Selling my body to different men from the age of 16!

JOHN

I'm sorry...I may not have been there then but...I...I am willing to be there now.

(Anna is crying. John moves closer to her)

I promise you, that I will be there now...

ANNA

(through the tears)

And how do you intend to do that? A poor priest with nothing. I have no education and nothing to my name. How will you possibly look after me?

John is speechless and thoughtful.

JOHN

I'll get you a job.

(gazes at her appearance)

A proper paying job.

Anna laughs.

ANNA

I bet my current job pays a whole lot more than any job you could possibly offer.

JOHN

And your soul? You said yourself that you've made sacrifices you regret. I am willing to atone for my mistakes, but are you?

ANNA

Don't use my words against me old man.

JOHN

I want a chance to know you and be a father to you. I cannot bring back the lost years or re-write my mistakes, but I want to correct them. Please let me.

Anna stares at him intently. She stumbles back into the front pew and weeps in her hands. John slowly sits by her. He hesitantly tries to hold her. He wraps his arms around her, and she sobs into his shoulder. He prays silently.

FADE TO BLACK.

TO BE CONTINUED...