

# I'M A WOMAN

## ACT ONE SCENE 1

*(A woman runs into the stage screaming for help, a baby in her arms. A nurse who rushes in with a doctor takes the baby from her. The nurse and the doctor exists the stage. The woman tries to follow them but she is withheld by the nurse. She walks restlessly around the stage. She is looking untidy, her hair is disheveled and her blouse is backward with a roughly tied wrapper. Some minutes later, the doctor comes back without the baby. The woman rushes and grabs the doctor's shirt.)*

**WOMAN:** Where is my son?

**DOCTOR:** Please ma let's go to my office *(Turns to leave)*

**WOMAN:** (*Grabs the doctor's shirt*) No way. I am not going anywhere. You must tell me here.

**DOCTOR:** Ma'am your child needs an emergency operation right now. The appendix is swollen and will soon rupture if the operation is not carried out immediately.

**WOMAN:** Then what are you waiting for? Go on with it.

**DOCTOR:** Ma you have to make a deposit of a hundred thousand naira.

**WOMAN:** (*Grabbing the doctor's coat, same time kneeling*) Ha! Doctor, I don't have that amount of money, I am just a woman trying to make ends meet to feed myself and my only child. Please have mercy.

**DOCTOR:** Ma, there is nothing I can do about it. I understand your plight but the earlier you make the payment the faster. Right now your child has high chances of survival but once that thing raptures, the chances of survival is less than twenty percent.

**WOMAN:** *(Starts crying)* Doctor please na. Help me. Please. Okay can I be paying bit by bit? I promise I won't run away. I will submit anything you want. Please save my only child. Please I beg you.

**DOCTOR:** Woman I have other patients to attend to. When you are ready, make payment through the accountant. Remember this is an emergency.

*(The doctor tries leaving but Woman grabs him. Doctor pulls Woman along with him. Doctor successfully*

*escape from her grip and leaves the stage. Woman sits on the ground lamenting.)*

WOMAN: *(Her hands on her head.)* What should I do?

I have no one to meet. Should I now sell those wrappers?

It won't be enough. My bed and my jewelries. *(She*

*stands up)* My only child cannot die. *(She runs out of*

*the stage trying fruitlessly to tie her loosening wrapper)*

## **ACT ONE SCENE 2**

*(Almost immediately, another woman enters the stage*

*carrying a big plastic container of abacha. She can be*

*heard calling people to come and patronize her abacha.*

*Her voice reduces to an inaudible sound. Another voice*

*is heard in the background as the abacha woman attends to a customer.)*

**VOICE:** *(There is melancholic music background as the voice speaks)* I am a woman. I have been there since the beginning. God knows I have been there. I have seen so many things, experienced the rough and the smooth, I've done it all. I am a mother, I know how to dish it out or take it all. My heart is as soft as feathers, still I weather stormy skies. I am a sparrow when I'm broken because I heal quickly, not totally by choice but because I am a woman. Because I am a woman, I am an eagle when I fly. It doesn't matter the colors life throws at me. Life, others can keep me in its vision but can never keep me down because I am a woman. I can be gentle as a dove yet my faith and pride is as strong as

steel because I am a woman. I am an everlasting  
shoulder and also a leading post of life. I am a woman,  
I hurt deep. When I cry I am as fragile as a child. I did  
not choose who I am but I won't back down from being  
a woman.

*(The abacha woman is through with the customer and  
the abacha is back on her head as the voice stops  
speaking but the melancholic music background  
remains. The woman continues hawking her abacha but  
stops when a child enters the stage on school uniform.)*

**ABACHA WOMAN:** Chineke! Chima why are you  
not in school and where are you going to?

**CHIMA:** They said I should go home till I pay school  
fees.

**ABACHA WOMAN:** Chai! *(She drops her abacha)*

but I have told them I will pay na. Nobody is at home.

What if I did not meet you on the way? I will pay. It's

not that I will not pay, times are hard. Take keys and go

home.

**CHIMA:** *(Takes the key)* Tomorrow is exam. No

payment, no exam.

**ABACHA WOMAN:** But I don't have money and I

am owing Mama Success and Papa Emma. I sold my

wedding gown last term. I don't know if Oga Efe will

have to borrow me. Just go home first. Let me sell my

market and meet Oga Efe.

*(The music background increases as they both exist the*

*stage using opposite directions)*

## ACT ONE SCENE 3

*(A man is sitting on a chair lost in deep thoughts. A woman comes to join him. She is dressed in cooperate. She sits on the chair close to him. She calls the attention of the man but the man is absent minded.)*

**IJEOMA:** *(Shouts)* Dear.

**MAN:** *(Jerks up, then sits back)* Sorry, you are home.

Welcome. How was work today?

**IJEOMA:** Dear I don't like what you are doing. I have been calling you since but you've been lost in thoughts.

Do you want to make me a widow?

**MAN:** Ijeoma you don't understand..



**IJEOMA:** I understand dear. I know how much you hate what is going on. But we should be grateful to God that I still have my job. Remember you supported me to get a job if that was what I wanted. Thank God because it could have been worse.

**MAN:** I am useless. I am a man yet I can't take care of my family.

**IJEOMA:** And I am a woman who is a help meet for you. You have been supporting us till you lost your job. And you have applied for other jobs. While we wait for a better opportunity don't forget you have me as your support. We are in this together. Please stop worrying over things you can't change.

**MAN:** Ijeoma I have no idea what I would have been without you. Thanks my love. I promise to surprise you one day.

**IJEOMA:** Dear the only surprise I need is for you to stop worrying. I need you alive..

**MAN:** *(Stands up)* Oh my God. I'm almost late for my interview. I have a meeting with the director this evening.

**IJEOMA:** Please hurry up let me go and prepare food.

*(They both exist the stage, as the music background increases.)*

## **ACT TWO SCENE 1**

*(A woman is sitting on a chair picking beans and humming to a song. A lady enters the stage carrying a box)*

**JANET:** Mama I am back.

**WOMAN:** *(Drops her basin, shock visible on her face)*

Who am I seeing? Janet? My daughter Janet. Chineke!

*(She runs to hug Janet's outstretched arms)*

**WOMAN:** *(Pulls away to check Janet)* Unbelievable!

Janet. My daughter is back.

**JANET:** Mama I'm not just back, I am taking you with me to live with me in my four bedroom flat in Lagos.

**WOMAN:** *(Starts dancing in circle tying her wrapper as she dances)* Chineke has done it oh. *(She stops her dance and hugs Janet again)* Janet, I remember the day

I had to sell almost everything to provide money for an emergency operation for you. Now look at you. I have not finished the money you have been sending and now you want to take me to your house. Chineke emela oh.

**JANET:** Mama that's not all. Come outside and see my brown new car.

**WOMAN:** You say wetin?

**JANET:** Brown new car mama. (*Grabs her mother's hand*) Come and see it.

**WOMAN:** Hey! I am coming. (*She runs and carries her tray of beans.*)

*(Janet holds her and leads her out of the stage.)*

## ACT TWO SCENE 2

*(The abcaha woman who is also now advanced in age is seen hawking her abacha. A customer stops to patronize her. Her phone rings as she brings down her plastic container.)*

**ABACHA WOMAN:** *(Picks her call)* Hello Chima.

*(Pauses)* You decided to remember your mother today.

*(Pauses)* How are you? *(Pauses and speaks to the*

*customer)* Sorry, please don't be offended. It's my son.

He is ajuwaya. He has not called for a long time. Don't

be offended. *(The customer nods, she turns her*

*attention back to the call.)* Yes oh. I have a customer

with me. *(Pauses)* What good news? I thought you said

you will be back from service this month? *(Pauses)*

You say wetin Chima. Chinke! Scholarship to USA.

Praise the Lorddddddddddd.

**CUSTOMER:** Halleluyah Mama Chima. What happened?

**ABACHA WOMAN:** My son is going to USA to do..  
em (*speaks to the phone*) Chima what are you doing again? (*pauses*) Praise thy Lord (*speaks to her customer*)  
He got a job for one USA company and they gave him scholarship to study masters while he works..praise thy Lord. (*speaks to Chima*) Find your way home first let's celebrate. After all I suffered, all the money I borrowed to send you to school, I need to celebrate. I am Mama Engineer Chima. Chima come and eat your mother's food before you travel. (*A brief pause*) Oh my customer. Bye bye. I am expecting you.

*(She breaks into a song and a dance while the customer congratulates her.)*

**ABACHA WOMAN:** You say how much abacha you won buy?

**CUSTOMER:** How much you dey sell today Mama Engineer Chima.

**ABACHA WOMAN:** Say it again.

**CUSTOMER:** Mama Engineer Chima.

**ABACHA WOMAN:** In fact, follow me to that side. Let me settle down and give you plenty plenty abacha for free. I am so happy.

*(They both start leaving the stage after Customer helps her to place her plastic container on her head while*

*chanting Mama Engineer Chima. She dances out of the stage as Customer follows her out.)*

## **EPILOGUE**

*(As Abacha woman and Customer leave the stage, the voice comes back with a music at the background)*

**VOICE:** I am woman, I am a mother, I am a friend, I am a wife. Though the storm may come, though trials will come, I have faith that my efforts are not in vain. Today may not look bright but I know tomorrow is better, therefore I am not of afraid of being who I am, a woman.

**THE END**