



# NOLLYWOOD DREAMS

BY JOCELYN BIOH



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



NOLLYWOOD DREAMS  
Copyright © 2018, Jocelyn Bioh

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of NOLLYWOOD DREAMS is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for NOLLYWOOD DREAMS are controlled exclusively by Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Dramatists Play Service, Inc., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to United Talent Agency, 888 Seventh Avenue, Seventh Floor, New York, New York 10106. Attn: Rachel Viola.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce NOLLYWOOD DREAMS is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS**

Dramatists Play Service, Inc. neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

NOLLYWOOD DREAMS was developed by the Cherry Lane Mentor Project (Angelina Fiordellisi, Founding Artistic Director) in April 2017. It was directed by Saheem Ali, the scenic design was by Arnulfo Maldonado, the costume design was by Dede Ayite, the lighting design was by Chris Thielking, the sound design was by Matt Otto, the video design was by Crystal Arnette, and the stage manager was Michael Denis. The cast was as follows:

AYAMMA OKAFOR ..... Nyahalé Allie  
DEDE OKAFOR ..... Nana Mensah  
GBENGA EZIE ..... Irungu Mutu  
WALE OWUSU ..... Washington Kirk  
FAYOLA OGUNLEYE ..... Kelechi Ezie  
ADENIKEH ..... Dorcas Sowunmi

NOLLYWOOD DREAMS was developed with the support of New York Stage & Film and Vassar’s Powerhouse Season, Summer 2016.

## NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

In the 1990s, Nigeria, in the midst of economic and political turmoil, saw an explosion of films being produced. Many of the themes of these films dealt with love and family issues but were rooted in subtext about the political strife/temperature of the country. In one of the most popular films, a man falls in love with two women: a commoner and the daughter of the president. Veiled in the cloak of a love triangle, we follow the main character's dilemma as he tries to choose living like the upper crust of Nigeria or a life of squalor with his (perhaps, true-love) commoner. Mainly released on video CDs (as they are easier to copy than DVDs) these films grossed such high revenue, by the early 2000s, "Nollywood" became and remains the second highest producing film industry in the world ("Bollywood" is first and the American film industry is third.) The quality of these films are usually low budget and are mainly improv'd by the actors based on loosely outlined storylines.

These are the films of my youth. I watched many of these films getting my hair done at my aunt's house or sitting in the heat of my mother's home all day on our family trips to Ghana. This play is my imagining of what it was like when the film industry in West Africa (namely Nigeria) was beginning to take the world by storm.

## CHARACTERS

(All characters are of West African descent and are to be played by Black and/or African actors. Thank you.)

AYAMMA OKAFOR (*I-yah-mah Oak-ah-fore*). 20s/early 30s. Aspiring Nigerian film actress with raw talent. Works as a travel agent/secretary at her parents' office. She is a big dreamer and hopes for a better life for herself as a famous actress.

DEDE OKAFOR (*Dee-dee Oak-ah-fore*). 20s/30s. Ayamamma's older sister. She works (lazily) at her parents' travel agency. She loves all things pop culture: talk shows, soap operas, and celebrities, she loves it all. Close with Ayamamma but also serves as Ayamamma's truth serum when need be.

GBENGA EZIE (*Beng-gah Ehh-zee*). 30s. Rising Nigerian film director. Is known to be rich and has studied in America but harbors dangerous secrets to his success.

WALE OWUSU (*Wha-lay Oh-woo-sue*). 20s/30s. Nigeria's hottest rising star. He is half Ghanaian and half Nigerian. He is constantly being hit on by women but they rarely ever get to know him or his story. Quietly confident.

FAYOLA OGUNLEYE (*Faye-oh-la Oh-goon-lay-ay*). 30s. Wildly referred to as "The Nigerian Halle Berry with Tina Turner Legs," as she is very beautiful and very sexy. She is pompous and arrogant and will say anything to get her way regardless of how it makes her look. She views Ayamamma as her prime competition.

ADENIKEH (*Ah-den-nee-kay*). Late 30s/early 40s. "The Nigerian Oprah Winfrey."

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER/MOVIE TRAILER VOICE. 20s and/or older; male. West African accent. The voice behind the television and on the movie trailer for *The Comfort Zone*.

## SETTING

Lagos, Nigeria. Early 1990s.

# NOLLYWOOD DREAMS

## Scene 1: Okafor Travel Agency

*Early afternoon at the agency. Dede hurries to sit in front of the television with a batch of cookies and a cup of warm tea. She is nearly bursting with excitement as the television announcer is heard.*

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER. (*Offstage/voiceover.*) Stay Tuned! Coming up next is a brand new episode of *Adenikeh*, where she interviews famous Nollywood film director—Gbenga Ezie! You won't want to miss it!

DEDE. (*Singing along with the television, off-key—smooth jazz kind of sound.*) “Adenikeh! Bringing love into your home!”

*As Dede eats her cookies, Ayamma enters the travel agency and hurriedly rushes passed Dede to the television.*

AYAMMA. Has *Adenikeh* started yet?!

DEDE. Eh-eh, watch it! You will spill my tea.

AYAMMA. Oh sorry. I'm just so excited!

DEDE. What is it, eh? Making all this fuss...  
What is this book you have?

AYAMMA. This is the script for that new Gbenga Ezie movie I was telling you about. I heard from some friends that he is having an open casting call for his new movie, so I went down to his studios and picked up a copy of the script!

DEDE. (*Eating cookies.*) Okay... So, what are you going to do with that?

AYAMMA. Audition!

*Small pause. Dede chews.*

DEDE. What?

AYAMMA. Come on Dede, you know that my true passion is acting.

DEDE. Ayamamma, are we still on this? I thought it was clear that you are...not...Good.

AYAMMA. Excuse me?

DEDE. Listen, I know that you have had a hard time getting over your breakup with Richard.

AYAMMA. Dede please.

DEDE. I understand. Finding out your boyfriend of two years has been cheating on you is devastating.

AYAMMA. Okay, can we not get into this right now.

DEDE. You know, he still calls here for you sometimes. But, me, I don't answer the phone.

AYAMMA. You never answer the phones.

DEDE. And I know that it has almost been a year since that poo-poo broke your heart and you have been passing the time with these silly hobbies, but honestly Ayamamma—

AYAMMA. This is not a hobby Dede, this is my calling! And I would never give up on the plan God has intended for me.

DEDE. (*Rolls eyes...sarcasm.*) Uh...okay.

AYAMMA. And this isn't about Richard. I've always wanted to be an actress! Don't you remember how amazing I was in that church play when I was eight years old?

DEDE. Yes, I remember... And you were not good then. It's only we were in church, we could not be honest.

AYAMMA. Well, it doesn't matter. I know that I am perfect for this part. It's like I always say, all you have to have is good looks. The director will do the rest.

DEDE. Mmm-hmm. A director. He's not a magician!

AYAMMA. Dede, I'm serious! This could be my big break! Can you imagine? Your little sister... My name in the lights... Ayamamma Okafor starring as "Comfort Aleshinloye" in *The Comfort Zone*.

DEDE. De what?

AYAMMA. That's the name of the movie—*The Comfort Zone*... There was a whole interview the director did in the newspaper about it. I'm

telling you—Nigerian movies are getting bigger and bigger. They think it might even cross over into America!

*Small pause. Dede chews.*

DEDE. Ayamma... I don't mean to pop your bubble sky dreams or whatever, but if this movie is going to be "so big," why would they put some nobody like you in it?

AYAMMA. You are not going to make jokes when I tell you the best part: Guess who is playing the leading man?

DEDE. Eddie Murphy?

AYAMMA. No... Think on it.

DEDE. It's not Eddie Murphy? I mean his accent in *Coming to America* was pretty good.

AYAMMA. No Dede... It's Wale Owusu.

DEDE. Wale Owusu?!

AYAMMA. Yes.

DEDE. As in my future husband?

AYAMMA. Yes!

DEDE. You mean, someone is going to PAY you for a chance to touch Wale Owusu?

AYAMMA. Not just touch... Kiss him!

DEDE. EHHH! We have to get in this movie!

AYAMMA. I know!

DEDE. So...how much does it pay?

AYAMMA. (*Deep breath.*) Two thousand dollars.

DEDE. Dollars? He's paying in American money?! How much is that in Naira?

AYAMMA. Three...hundred...thousand...Naira.

DEDE. For one movie?

*Ayamma nods her head excitedly.*

Ayamma, if we do enough of these movies... WE ARE GOING TO BE RICH!

AYAMMA. Shhhh! Dede—just calm down. We can celebrate AFTER I actually get the part, eh.



DEDE. Okay, okay. I just cannot believe this!

AYAMMA. I know, me too! But I need to focus. My audition is in one week and I want to be off book by then.

DEDE. Which book?

AYAMMA. OFF book. It is how American actors say “memorize.”

DEDE. These people. As if learning English is not hard enough.

AYAMMA. (*Gives Dede the script.*) Okay, so you’re going to read all of the lines that say “James.”

DEDE. (*Smitten.*) Is that who Wale is going to play?

AYAMMA. Yes. And I’m going to read for “Comfort.” Let’s just go ahead and read the scene for cold— (*Proud of herself.*) —that means for the first time—and then we’ll go back.

DEDE. (*Chews cookie.*) Okay.

*Ayamma begins a long version of what she thinks is “actor prep” before launching into the scene.*

AYAMMA. (*Melodramatic.*) “But why didn’t you tell me? All this time I’ve been here waiting for you to come back to me. Only to find out you have a wife... A family...and a job that you cannot leave.”

DEDE. (*Chews, uninvested.*) “Oh Comfort. If only you know how much I want to be with you.”

AYAMMA. “With me? Oh please. Actions speak louder than words James!”

DEDE. “You don’t know how many times my heart beats for you when I lay in bed at night. And how I dream of being your liver.”

AYAMMA. (*Breaking character.*) Lover.

DEDE. Fine, “Lover.” Ah! But why are these words so small? I can barely see.

AYAMMA. Dede please. Just... Pay attention. I want to be perfect.

DEDE. (*Sucks teeth.*) Whatever. But as soon as *Adenikeh* comes on, I’m done.

AYAMMA. Fine. Where I was? Ah yes... (*Back in character.*) “Well if you dream of us being together, why don’t you just leave your wife? Be with me. Let us stay here and live our lives together. Forever!”

DEDE. “You don’t understand... It is so complicated. I just don’t

know what to do.” (*Sucks teeth.*) It doesn’t sound complicated to me. He is going to leave his wife, children, and green card in America to come here and live with you in some rundown flat in Lagos? This movie is stupid.

AYAMMA. (*Snatching the script back from Dede.*) It’s not stupid. It’s about love.

What would you know about that anyway?

DEDE. Eh-eh! Much more than you Ayammas! Like the love I have for Wale Owusu! It’s strong, oh! And that is the only reason I will buy this movie... Oh and the money we will get.

AYAMMA. Eh, I will get.

DEDE. Yeah, yeah, I’ll give you some too.

*They laugh a bit.*

AYAMMA. Aww man Dede, if I book this movie, I don’t know what I’d do! Finally leaving this travel agency and living my REAL dream.

DEDE. (*Wasn’t listening.*) Oh, speaking of which, Daddy has a big account with some students from Europe and he wants to make sure you handle it.

AYAMMA. Ah, why can’t you do it?

DEDE. Well, first above all, you are the only one of us who knows how to use these crazy computers. And anyway, I’m older than you. I have other things to do.

AYAMMA. Like what? Sit in Mary’s hair salon all day and talk about what is happening on *Days of Our Lives*?

DEDE. Eh-eh! Where else am I supposed to watch it? We only get two clear channels on this thing and I can’t miss it! On the next episode, it looks like Marlena is finally going to escape from Stefano’s prison lair... I’m telling you. It’s going to be good.

AYAMMA. I think it’s best if I spend my time working on this script, thank you.

*Dede offers Ayammas a cookie.*

DEDE. Want one?

AYAMMA. No, no. I need to watch my figure.

# NOLLYWOOD DREAMS

by Jocelyn Bioh

2 men, 4 women

It's the nineties and in Lagos, Nigeria, the "Nollywood" film industry is exploding. Ayamma dreams of leaving her job at her parents' travel agency and becoming a star. When she auditions for a new film by Nigeria's hottest director, tension flares with his former leading lady—as sparks fly with Nollywood's biggest heartthrob.

**Also by Jocelyn Bioh**  
SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN  
MEAN GIRLS PLAY

ISBN 978-0-8222-3865-2



**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**