

Patience Agbabi

The Wife of Bafa (from *Transformatrix*, 2000)

My name is Mrs Alice Ebi Bafa.
 I come from Nigeria.
 I'm very fine, isn't it.
 My next birthday I'll be...twenty-nine.
 I'm business woman.
 Would you like to buy some cloth?
 I've all the latest styles from Lagos,
 Italian shoe and handbag to match,
 lace, linen and Dutch wax.
 I only buy the best
 and I travel first class.

Some say I have blood on my hands
 'cause I like to paint my nails red
 but others call me femme fatale.
 My father had four wives
 so I've had five husbands.
 I cast a spell with my gap-toothed smile
 and my bottom power.
 Three were good and two were bad.

The first three were old and rich
 and I was young and fit.
 They died of exhaustion.
 The fourth one was ladies' man.
 I could not count his women on one hand
 but he'd rage if I looked at another man.
 I was very wild when I was young.
 They called me Miss Highlife,
 I was not considered a good wife
 but I always respected my husband.
 He died when I returned from this London.

The fifth one I married for love.
 He was studying law at University of Ibadon.
 He was not yet twenty-one,
 wicked in bed and so handsome
 but he liked pornographic magazine.

His favourite was Playboy.
One day I threw it on fire
to teach him a lesson.
He turned into wife batterer.
He was to regret his action.
I beat him till he begged for his ancestors.
Now we get on like house on fire.

Some say I'm a witchcraft
'cause I did not bear them children.
They do not understand your Western medicine.

You like my headtie.
It's the latest fashion.
They sell like hot cake on Victoria Island.
Fifty pounds.
I give you discount 'cause I like your smile.
The quality is very good.
If I take off more I will not make profit
and I travel to Lagos next week.
Make it my lucky day.
Please, I beg you.

