

A Life of Sin

By

John Jeanes

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(+44) 07810 726 152
johnmjeanes@gmail.com

INT. CHURCH - DAY

In a grand, gothic church only whispers can be heard. With few windows and huge walls it's dark, lit mostly by candles.

Through the large front door steps ANNA (19). She is a slight girl and pretty, but kept in a scruffy manor, looking tired and worn for her age.

She slowly enters pulling her coat tighter around her, daunted by the grandeur of the church. Moving through she looks up at the statues, intimidated.

CUT TO:

ANNA sits inside the confession box opposite the PRIEST.

ANNA
(Nervous)
Hello.

PRIEST
Hello.

ANNA
Should I call you, 'Father'?

PRIEST
If you'd like. Is this your first time in confession?

ANNA
Yes. I didn't know where else to...

PRIEST
What's the problem? Have you sinned?

ANNA
Yes.

PRIEST
How have you sinned?

ANNA
I...

Silence.

ANNA
I take money from men....to....

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come.

PRIEST

No, you should. This is a good place to come. Why don't you tell me your name?

ANNA

It's Anna. Do you think we could talk somewhere else, father? I don't like it much in here.

CUT TO:

Anna and the Priest sit in a quiet space off to the side of the church. We get our first proper look at the priest. He's a respectable looking man of 49, with a friendly face and graying hair.

The pair sit opposite each other. Anna's head is down and she looks uncomfortable.

PRIEST

Do you need me to do anything for you in particular, Anna?

She shakes her head.

PRIEST

Are you a religious girl?

Shakes again.

PRIEST

That's fine. Anything you want to talk about?

ANNA

I don't know.

PRIEST

Ok.

ANNA

Actually I should probably be off.

PRIEST

Ok, if you think so. Hang on. Here...

He picks up a bible and hands it to her.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Why don't you take this. Sometimes when I'm struggling to understand the world I turn here. Now, it might not do the same for you, but it's worth a go.

ANNA

Ok.

PRIEST

And if you do end up reading any. Maybe you could come back here and we could talk some more.

ANNA

Thankyou.

Anna stands and heads out while the concerned Priest watches her leave.

INT. BUS - DUSK

Anna sits on a bus looking out at the city going by. A gray dusk sets over the dilapidated scenes of this part of town.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Anna sits on the floor with her legs across a dingy corridor. She sits smoking in a small, very plain, black dress. She is in a world of her own while people walk about her. As a man approaches to pass she moves her legs and gives a polite smile.

SANDRA (48), wearing more clothes than the rest of the girls approaches.

SANDRA

ANNA! Anna! Room 2.

ANNA

I thought I had ten minutes!

SANDRA

No, after, come-on.

Anna rises and heads down the corridor. She lingers outside the door for a second before heading in and shutting the door behind her.

INT. BROTHEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A different door opens and out comes Anna. Before the door closes we see a large man getting dressed in the room behind her. Anna comes to the desk and hands Sandra some money before lighting up.

SANDRA

Room 5.

Without any acknowledgment Anna heads off and into another room.

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - NIGHT

Anna enters her tiny run down flat. Everything is old and dated and the place is dingy but it's tidy with a feminine touch.

Anna puts the rusty kettle on and light a cigarette. As the loud steam gushes from the kettle she stares out the window. The first light hits the city below her and she looks tired after a long night. A cat approaches on the kitchen top and she welcomes him friendly.

INT. ANNA'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Anna lowers her tired, seemingly fragile body into a full bath. The bath edges are rusty and the room is run down. She smokes as she lays, tapping ash into the soap tray and reflecting on the night. She reaches out to her side and picks up the bible. She opens it and starts reading.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Anna stands alone at a bus stop on a gray, windy day.

INT. CHURCH ROOM - DAY

Anna and the Priest sit in the same room as before.

PRIEST

How are you finding it?

ANNA

It's....well it's a little over my head, but It's ok, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Good. I'm glad you're giving it a go. Any part in particular I can help you with?

Shakes her head.

PRIEST

Anything you want to ask? Not just about the bible. About anything.

Anna deliberates and builds the courage to ask.

ANNA

Does God watch me, father? Does he watch what I do?

She doesn't look up. He's unsure of how to respond.

PRIEST

He does. He also sees that your here.

Silence follows.

PRIEST

Do you believe in God, Anna? Really believe?

ANNA

I...I want to.

PRIEST

Why do you have reservations?

ANNA

(Shrugs)

I can't believe God would do such things.

PRIEST

What things?

ANNA

Some of the things that happen. What kind of God would let terrible things happen?

PRIEST

Is it not possible he has a plan? That he controls everything and everything that happens, happens for a reason.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

I've seen some terrible things.

PRIEST

We live in a mysterious world. It's not for us to keep trying to understand things that are beyond us. People try to force logic to things that it can't be applied to. All we can do is trust in our faith.

ANNA

(Unconvinced)

Yeah. I guess so.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Anna sits on the stairs, out the way of the more busy corridor. She smokes as she reads, lent over the bible in her lap.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - NIGHT.

The small room is dark and rundown with worn-out, old fashioned decor. Anna stands at a cupboard and stabs out her cigarette in an ashtray.

She turns to face a small, nasty looking man sitting on the edge of the bed smoking. His small eyes look her up and down and every so often he sniffs violently.

MAN

Take it off.

Anna robotically shifts the straps of her dress off her shoulders and it falls to floor leaving her standing in just knickers.

Sniff. His beady eyes slither all over her innocent body. Anna is still, her face expressionless and her eyes empty. Not scared or nervous, just empty.

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - NIGHT

In the darkness Anna kneels on the floor by her bed in her small studio flat. Her hands clasped, her eyes tightly closed, she presses her knuckles to her lips and prays.

INT. CHURCH ROOM - DAY

The pair sit in usual fashion. Anna has now become a lot more comfortable with the surroundings and the Priest and sits more comfortably

PRIEST

Why do you work there, Anna?

ANNA

It's warmer than the street.

PRIEST

You know what I mean!

ANNA

It's all I've ever done.

PRIEST

Do they treat you well, the men?

ANNA

Umm...It varies. It's not as simple as you think, you know. There's a lot of good guys that come in and treat me badly. It's not 'cause they aren't decent people in normal life, it's just what they like, it's the reason they come. And I have to let them indulge in whatever they want. In some cases that's treating me rough, yeah. But it varies. I've got one man who comes, he likes me to pretend I'm his wife who died years ago. I've even got one of her old dresses that I wear. It's not always as simple as you think. Not always, at least.

The priest finds it somewhat hard to comprehend and silence ensues. Noticing, Anna recoils uncomfortably.

ANNA

Why are you good to me, father?

PRIEST

God isn't judgmental. And I try not to be, either.

Anna looks embarrassed.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The pair sit in the back row of pews in the empty church on another occasion.

ANNA

How did you come to be doing this,
Father?

PRIEST

(Awkward)
Ummm, well...

ANNA

You don't have to tell me. I'm
sorry. I shouldn't have asked.

PRIEST

It's ok, I'll tell you. My parents
died. When I was twelve. I got put
into a religious institute for
children like me. There they, well,
taught me about it. There they
bring you up on religion. And I
just...I took to it. I guess it
came naturally. I've just been
lucky.

ANNA

Lucky? What about your parents?

PRIEST

I know I'm lucky in many other
ways.

ANNA

Can I ask you a something, Father?

PRIEST

Of course.

ANNA

What's your name?

PRIEST

My name? What do you want to know
my name for?

ANNA

(Shrugs)
I just do.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Ok, but don't let anyone ever hear you say it. Especially the Priests! It's Ben.

ANNA

Ben. I like it.

Anna smiles and it makes him smile too.

INT. BROTHEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Anna emerges from a room holding her dress over her body as other women come out of the other rooms. They all look to the room at the end of the corridor where banging and crashing can be heard. Anna looks to the desk.

ANNA

Sandra, what's the matter?

SANDRA

(Concerned)

It's Sarah. Roman, dragged her in!

The girls flinch and grimace at the sound of a horrific beating. Soon a furious man (45) in a suit comes out panting.

ROMAN

(To Sandra, in Russian accent)

Give me the key.

Sandra throws it too him and he locks the door.

ROMAN

Don't open this door till I'm back tomorrow!

INT. CHURCH ROOM - DAY

Anna sits, smoking in a trance like contemplation while talking to the Priest.

ANNA

One of the girls ran off a few weeks ago. Sarah, nice girl, only seventeen. Just didn't show up one day and not a word since. She must have shown up somewhere in town cos they found her last night. Beat the shit out of her for leaving. Even

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (cont'd)
dragged her back and did it there.
Probably to set an example. We
couldn't even go in to help her
afterwards. Poor girl.

PRIEST
Who are these men?

ANNA
Owners of the place. There's a
bunch of them, Russian fellas. One
of them runs the place mainly
though. He's terrifies me.

The Priest looks upon Anna with concern.

PRIEST
Could you not get out of all this?

ANNA
Well, Sarah tried. They don't like
it much. We each have a lot of
regulars. If they lose one of us
they lose a lot of business. And
even if I could, what would I do?
This is all I can do.

PRIEST
How have you come to this Anna?
Where are your parents?

Anna gets distressed.

PRIEST
It's ok, you don't have to talk
about that.

ANNA
I will. I'll tell you. I'll tell
you if you explain to me what god
was thinking.

The priest looks back at the young girl glumly.

ANNA
My parents... Don't suppose you get
many like them coming here too
often. But maybe they're not so
rare where I'm from. My mother
would drink herself to sleep every
night, well, and day. She didn't
work. She'd stay home while my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (cont'd)

father would go down the steel works. They never really got on that well. They would row and fight a lot. But for some reason she still worshiped him underneath it all. Even when he'd beat her blue she still loved him. I never really understood that. I don't now. My mother never really had much time for me. My father would though. He would take me out every Wednesday night. Only down the pub with him or something, but I enjoyed it. Sitting next to him and... When I grew up these things stopped. He was less and less bothered with me and became like my mother for the last few years. But at... at fifteen he raped me. And....and it soon became more regular. My mother knew it was going on. She knew. She knew and she hated me for it. She treated me like his other woman, like a mistress. She was angry and bitter.... One day when he was at work she kicked me out. I was fifteen, on the street, and the rest is pretty straight forward.

The Priest looks at the girl in complete shock.

PRIEST

Anna.....

ANNA

Hmm.

PRIEST

I'm....

ANNA

I know. Just tell me why.

He's silent.

ANNA

Why would god let that happen to me?

The Priest stares back into her deep, pain-filled eyes without an answer.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Anna holds her coat tightly around her as she walks down a run-down street on a gray, windy day. Head down against the wind she pushes on.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The huge empty church is still and dead quiet. Alone in the church the Priest sits in the middle of the pews. His hands are clasped in prayer, but his eyes open and troubled. He opens his hands and buries his face.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Anna sits on the stairs again looking troubled. She sits thinking, worried. Puts her hand to her head.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The Priest stands in front of the congregation giving a service to rows of people.

CUT TO:

He stands amongst the congregation after the service. They are all mingling as people begin to leave. Through the crowd he spots the still figure of Anna waiting for him.

PRIEST
....Excuse me.

He heads over. Anna looks worried.

ANNA
Can we talk somewhere?

PRIEST
The whole place is busy. Come, come outside.

EXT. BEHIND THE CHURCH - DAY

The pair are alone and take a seat on a bench. The day is gray, but the air is still. Anna looks very serious.

ANNA
I have a confession to make. When I first came here a few months ago,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (cont'd)
there was more of a reason than I
told you.

PRIEST
Ok.

She takes a long, deep breath.

ANNA
I'm pregnant.

She looks up to his reaction.

ANNA
I'd just found out. I didn't know
where to go or what to do.

PRIEST
Anna...

ANNA
I still don't!

PRIEST
Is it....??

ANNA
A customers. God knows who! I've
just been trying to get on with
things, but I'm running out of
time, I'm starting to show. Last
night one of them looked at me
funny and asked me if I was.

PRIEST
What did you say?

ANNA
I brushed it aside, but can't for
much longer. Not doing what I do.
I've.... I can't...

She breaks down and the Priest embraces her.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Anna and the Priest sit in the pews of the empty church.
They speak quietly to one another.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Just tell me Anna and I'll do anything to help. Whatever it is.

ANNA

I know. Thank you. Can you tell me something, Father? How can god treat people so differently? If two babies are born in the same minute, before they have had the chance to do anything right or wrong, how can one be given everything it needs and the other be, well, bound for hardship.

PRIEST

(Troubled)

I don't know, Anna.

ANNA

What chance has this kid got? What kind of life can I give it?! I guess we should hope for a boy, just so he can't follow in his mother's footsteps.

The Priest puts his arm around her. The pair sit in silence.

INT. ANNA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Anna lays in the bath deep in thought. She looks down to her stomach laying her hand across it. She takes a deep breath of determination. A tear creeps out.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Anna and the Priest sit at the back of the church while a small ceremony goes on way down at the front.

ANNA

I'm leaving tomorrow.

PRIEST

Is there anything you need?

ANNA

No. Thankyou. And not just for that, for everything.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

You don't have to thank me. Me or anyone else.

They sit in silence.

PRIEST

Can I tell you something, Anna? On Monday I sat in confession. A man came in. He is part of the congregation, but I don't know him well. He confessed to sleeping with a prostitute. He sat there and confessed like it was nothing, like he'd forgotten to water the plants. Then waited. He just sat there, waiting for my forgiveness. I can't tell you, Anna.... It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do as a Priest.

Anna stares at the ground.

PRIEST

I'm sorry Anna, for everything. Everything you've been through.

ANNA

Ok.

PRIEST

You haven't deserved any of it. Don't forget that Anna. But your still here. Still going. Just don't stop.

ANNA

I'm terrified.

PRIEST

You'll get through.

ANNA

Do you think god may have done this? Done this to get me out. Maybe this is part of his plan.

PRIEST

Could well be.

ANNA

I'd better go. I'll come back tomorrow before I leave.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Anna once again powers through the winds. She strides with determination.

INT. CHURCH ROOM - NIGHT

The Priest dozes in a comfortable chair in the room off from the church. Off-screen comes the voice of an alarmed Priest.

PRIEST 2 (O.S)
Father... Father!

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The Priest runs towards the entrance to the hospital, lit up in the night.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The Priest approaches a room with a doctor and they stop outside.

DOCTOR
I'm afraid it was a very serious attack, Father. She should recover fine over the next few days, but we'll have to keep her in to watch her. However, did you know she was expecting a child?

PRIEST
Yes.

DOCTOR
I'm afraid the injuries to her abdomen were very severe. She's lost the baby.

The Priest doesn't respond.

DOCTOR
Father, it shocks me to have to have to tell you this.

The doctor struggles uncomfortably.

DOCTOR
But, looking at her injuries... it does suggest that the baby was targeted specifically.

He sees grief fill the Priest's eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The Priest enters the private room quietly. Anna lays in the bed on her front, sobbing into her arm. The priest slowly approaches and sits next to the bed. He puts his hand gently on her shoulder.

PRIEST
How did they know?

ANNA
(Sobbing)
I don't know. Someone must have
noticed my....I left it too late.

The Priest's eyes close in pain.

ANNA
I begged them....I begged for it's
life.

They are both still, quiet. There are no words to say.

EXT. HOSPITAL A&E - NIGHT.

Full of sorrow the Priest stands getting some fresh air. He watches the people around him. A man stands throwing up against the building a bit further down. A panicking man come running towards the building. As he runs past, the Priest sees that he carries his young daughter in his arms. Despair.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The Priest walks down the corridor holding two cups of tea. He opens the door to Anna's room with his elbow. The bed is empty.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Anna stands in the blowing wind on the large flat industrial roof, a door swinging behind her. In agony, her eyes roll to the sky. The furious wind blows her hair all about her. She starts to run. Sprinting barefoot, her gown catches the wind and her hair blasts about her face.

SLOW MOTION:

(CONTINUED)

Anna's face is calm, slowly bouncing up and down with her strides. Her eyes wander, they no longer harbour pain, but a calm resignation. She leaps.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The church is empty. A coffin sits at the front of the church between the first few rows of pews. It is there the only man in the church sits. It is the Priest. He raises his head and looks at the coffin to his side. He rises and heads up the steps at the front of the church before turning to face the empty room below him. His anguish builds. He turns to the front of the church. He looks to the huge stain glass window of god with open arms towering above him. He looks up to his face in anger, in disgust. He stares deep into the eye's of god with nothing but contempt. He turns and walks out.

FADE OUT.