

Learning by Ear – Religious Dialogue: “A Bridge over Gori”

Episode 07: “In the Church of One God”

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List of characters for episode 7:

- Narrator /Philip, male (17)
- Harry, male (17)
- Marian Okru, female (16)
- Preacher, Reverend Immanuel, male (40)
- Layla, female (16)
- Hassan, male (12)
- Ishmail Omer, Layla’s father, male (43)
- Sister Rebecca, female (28)
- + Church congregation
- + Students in library

1. SIG TUNE UP

2. INTRO:

Welcome to Learning by Ear and Episode 7 of our 10 part radio drama series “A Bridge over Gori”, which tells the dramatic story of how religion and politics drive a wedge between two communities and two families...

Join our young heroes as they try to resolve a conflict which seems to be set in stone.

In today’s episode called “In the Church of One God”, find out if injured Hassan, Layla’s young brother, changes his opinion of the Jewish nurse, Sister Rebecca, and if Harry lets himself be sucked into something much bigger than he expected... Philip is one of Harry’s best friends. He tells us the whole story.

Listen in!

Scene 1. Under Gori Bridge

Philip, Harry, Layla

- 3. PHILIP/NARRATOR:** Layla's brother Hassan was clearly implicated in the arson attack of the Catholic Church in Gori, in Father Barnabus' own diocese. The Islamic Council's hopes of obtaining permission to erect a new mosque on prime land in the centre of Gori were surely dashed. Sympathy for Father Barnabus, Harry's uncle, would most likely win him the vote on the Development Council for his own church plans on that land. He had said as much to my father, Daniel Layton-Browne, the editor of the *Gori Tribune* newspaper. Relations between Christians and Muslims were at an all time low.
- Every afternoon after school Harry and Layla met under Gori Bridge - a Christian boy and a Muslim girl. And as they talked about what Ubuntu meant, they began to realise what they meant to each other... to my great despair.

- 4. SFX: River flowing, birds, cars passing by in a distance**

- 5. HARRY:** My dear Layla, "I am because of you".

6. **LAYLA:** Hold me tight, Harry.
7. **PHILIP/NARRATOR:** As the brown River Gori flowed past, I knew... If I wanted Layla to ever turn to me, I would have to lay a trap for Harry. Marian, who stood in for Layla at the school Debating Club, was the perfect accomplice! Because... she liked Harry!

Scene 2. First outside and then inside the Charismatic church

Marian, Harry, Preacher, congregation

8. **SFX: Loud singing of Christian songs from inside the church**
9. **MARIAN:** Hah, Harry! I was hoping you would take up my invitation to see for yourself how we, from the Free Church of One God, celebrate the Lord. Come, Reverend Henry Immanuel has already started the service.
10. **HARRY:** Wow, Marian, is that his car, that huge four by four?
11. **MARIAN:** Yes, it's a gift from his devoted followers. I contributed, too. I like to think my money paid for the silk cushion on the back seat.

- 12. HARRY:** But these are **poor** people I see coming into the church. What can they possibly have to give away?
- 13. MARIAN:** They'll give him their last cent. Reverend Immanuel is a prophet. He can save us all. Come in and be saved.
- 14. SFX: Door opening, entering church. Door closes. Clapping/singing/wailing/ ululating.**
- 15. PREACHER'S VOICE:** Come forward and be blessed. The Lord is with thee. We aim to collect five thousand dollars... Five thousand dollars for the work of the Lord. Those who give, to them shall the Lord grant eternal life.
- 16. MARIAN:** **(whispers)** Here – let me put this around your neck, Harry! As a reminder of the One True Lord.
- 17. HARRY:** **(whispers)** What is it?
- 18. MARIAN:** Just a gold chain with a crucifix.
- 19. HARRY:** But I...we can't wear religious symbols in school.
- 20. MARIAN:** You're not in school, silly. You're in God's House.

21. HARRY: Look - I don't think your Reverend Henry Immanuel has any right to call himself a prophet. Or to take money from the poor. He puts them all into a trance! Look at them.

22. SFX: ululating and ecstatic screaming comes up

23. MARIAN: They are filled with the Holy Spirit.

24. HARRY: But the Holy Spirit is free. They are being tricked into paying and that is so wrong. A man of God should give to the poor, not take from them.

25. MARIAN: Ours is the Church of One God. We give freely!

26. HARRY: I'm going. I'll see you at school on Monday.

27. SFX: steps leaving on stone floor, church door opens and closes

28. BRIDGING MUSIC

29. PHILIP/NARRATOR: Meanwhile Layla wanted to talk to her father about Hassan. Her brother was still refusing all food and treatment in hospital because he wouldn't accept help from a Jewish nurse. Sister Rebecca ignored this and went on trying to help him. Layla was very worried. Thank goodness Mr Omer was home one evening, for a change. He cooked a lovely dinner for Layla and himself. He was relaxed and willing to talk – and to listen.

Scene 3. At the Omer's

Layla, Mr. Omer

30. SFX: Eating dinner, soft Islamic music in the background, dishes clattering, pouring some juice into glasses

31. LAYLA: Papa. Thanks for this fresh mango juice and the lovely dinner! It smells delicious! But **(voice changing to a sad tone)** let's talk about my brother. Hassan is refusing all help because Sister Rebecca is, what he calls, one of the People of the Book.

32. MR OMER: **(talking with full mouth)** A Jew? Sister Rebecca? So what? He owes his life to her! My goodness! Where does he get these awful ideas from? My family has never called our non-Muslim friends 'infidels'.

- 33. LAYLA:** He's only 12, papa. He can change and be taught to lead a good life. But we have to spend more time with him. Ever since mama died, he's become so withdrawn. I think the boys in the madrassa have used him.
- 34. MR OMER:** What do you want me to do, Layla?
- 35. LAYLA:** We both need to spend more time with him. Show an interest in what he does, what he reads. A young person who is cared for doesn't burn down churches! Sister Rebecca is a good person. I think she wants to help.
- 36. BRIDGING MUSIC**

Scene 4. In hospital

Sister Rebecca, Hassan

- 37. SFX: Hospital ambience, sister Rebecca opening Velcro-strip of blood pressure meter**
- 38. SISTER REBECCA:** Hassan, give me your arm and let me take your blood pressure, please. I am your friend.
- 39. SFX: some rustling and pumping of pressure sleeve**

40. **HASSAN:** I don't want you to be my friend.
41. **SISTER REBECCA:** Hassan. I am a nurse. I can help you get better.
42. **SFX: Air from blood pressure meter passing of slowly**
43. **SISTER REBECCA** 80 over 120. AH! Your blood pressure is really fine now.
44. **SFX: Opening Velcro-strip of blood pressure meter**
45. **SISTER REBECCA:** Look. We are here on this Earth to do good. Your religion tells you that. My religion tells me that. I can do good by helping you.
46. **HASSAN:** I was told Jews are infidels.
47. **SISTER REBECCA:** Hassan – we are all children of God and you must decide for yourself what to believe. But if you always see the differences between people and never the humanity that binds us all, you will be very unhappy.
48. **HASSAN:** **(angrily)** You are Jewish. You do not love Muslims.

49. SISTER REBECCA: That is not true. My religion teaches me that Muslims and Jews worship the same God and we are both descendants of Abraham. Jerusalem is your Holy City and ours. We are from the same tree. We are Abraham's children, Hassan.

50. HASSAN: **(sobbing)** I just want to die and be with my mother.

51. SISTER REBECCA: Hassan, I believe that God gave us life. Your life is precious. It is not to be wasted. In the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, you can read the verse that says: *"And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you"*.

52. HASSAN: **(crying)** I don't deserve mercy!

53. SISTER REBECCA: Of course you do! You must try and forgive yourself!

54. Singing softly a sweet African song (local lullaby)

55. HASSAN: My hands hurt. Can you help me! Please?

56. SISTER REBECCA: Here!

57. SFX: opens bottle

58. SISTER REBECCA: Let me put this ointment on! There!

59. **HASSAN:** (in pain) Oh! Ouch! (Sigh) Hah! That's better.

60. **SISTER REBECCA:** Good! Now... lean back and have a good sleep.

61. **HASSAN:** Thank you Sister.

62. **SFX: Footsteps leaving, door opens, closes**

63. **BRIDGING MUSIC**

64. **PHILIP/NARRATOR:** Meanwhile, at school, my plan to trap Harry took an unexpected turn when Marian came up to me in the library...

Scene 5. In the school library

Marian, Philip

65. **SFX: students murmuring in the background, books being placed on tables, turning book pages, paper rustling**

66. **MARIAN:** (whispers) Philip. Harry has a crucifix around his neck.

67. **PHILIP:** Uh? How come, Marian?

68. **MARIAN:** I gave it to him yesterday. I'm sure he's forgotten about it. If Layla finds it she'll be mad! Then I'll have a chance with Harry and you'll get your Layla, if that's what you really want!

69. PHILIP: Go now Marian. I have a plan but he mustn't see us talking. Go.

70. SFX: Marian leaving, steps leaving fast

71. BRIDGING MUSIC

72. PHILIP/NARRATOR: Marian was right: this was the perfect chance for both of us to break Harry and Layla up. Harry was deeply absorbed in his maths homework when I asked him to show me the crucifix around his neck. He took the chain off without thinking. I slipped it into my pocket without Harry even noticing!

73. SIG TUNE UP

74. OUTRO:

And that's all from *Learning by Ear* for today. Please join us for Episode 8 of our series "A Bridge over Gori", and find out if Harry will fall into Philip's trap! And remember, if you want to hear the programme again, tell friends about it or send us your comments, please visit our website at [www dot d w – world dot d e slash lbe](http://www.world.ded.lbe). Goodbye for now!

End of Episode 7