

LEARNING BY EAR 2011

“The Promised Land – A Story of African Migration to Europe”

EPISODE SIX: “A Continent So Near, Yet So Far”

AUTHOR: Chrispin Mwakideu

EDITORS: Katrin Ogunsade, Klaus Dahmann

List of characters by scene:

SCENE ONE: SULE AND FARAHANI WATCHING THE NEWS

- Farahani (m, 19)
- Sule (m, 19)
- Presenter (f, 30)

SCENE TWO: MARAGA FAMILY AT HOME AFTER SUPPER

- Mr. Maraga (m, 60)
- Mrs. Maraga (m, 55)

SCENE THREE: LINDA AND CHIVASI TALKING ONLINE

- Linda (f, 20)
- Chivasi (m, 22)

SCENE FOUR: LINDA CALLS FLORENCE FROM PHONE BOOTH

- **Linda (f, 20)**
- **Florence (f, 35)**

INTRO:

Hello and welcome once again to your favourite radio drama programme, Learning by Ear. This is the sixth episode of our ongoing series called **“The Promised Land – A Story of African Migration to Europe”**. Just to bring you up to date: in the last episode, Linda arrived at her final destination in Europe after a very difficult journey, and is about to commence her studies. Meanwhile, our friend Farahani has been sent back to Africa after trying to cross into Europe illegally. So where will the story take us today? Keep listening to find out. Today's episode is called, **“A Continent So Near, Yet So Far”**. We start off with Farahani and his best friend Sule, who are watching TV. Farahani can't believe his eyes when he suddenly sees himself on the news! They're running a report about a boat full of migrants, who were intercepted at sea while trying to get to Europe. Farahani hasn't told anyone about his attempt - not even Sule...

SCENE ONE: SULE AND FARAHANI WATCHING NEWS

1. SFX: JINGLE PLAYS, SIGNALLING BREAKING NEWS ON TV

- 2. PRESENTER:** Hello, and welcome to our round-up of this week's news. These migrants - some from as far away as Central Africa - were intercepted on Monday by officers of European border agency, Frontex, as they attempted to enter Europe by sea. We've been told that several others who were with them are believed to have died en route, of dehydration. When the boat was stopped, one migrant jumped into the sea in a bid to escape detention, but he was quickly rescued by the Frontex lifeguards. The boat was then returned to our shores, from which it is believed to have set off. This is in line with the agreement signed recently between our government and the European Union, that all those seeking to migrate illegally to Europe will be repatriated. We'll fill you in with more details as the story develops. In other news, the President has unveiled new plans to strengthen the infrastructure in the south of the country -

3. SFX: SUDDEN CUT INBETWEEN THE NEWS TO ORIENTAL MUSIC ON TV, AS WHEN SOMEONE SWITCHES THE CHANNEL. ORIENTAL MUSIC PLAYING IN BACKGROUND

4. **SULE:** **(shocked)** Farahani, why did you change the channel! That man! He looked exactly like you. Did you see?
5. **FARAHANI:** **(coughing)** Well, I’m ... urrgh.... not blind or deaf! Of course I did.
6. **SULE:** It **was** you, wasn’t it? And you didn’t even tell me! What now? Are you still thinking of trying to cross by boat? They’ll only catch you and send you back again, you know that!
7. **FARAHANI:** **(angrily)** So what? If they send me back, I’ll try again, and again and again, until they recognize my face and realize I’m never going to stop trying! Then they’ll let me in. Sule, we were so close! Persistence is the key here, my friend.
8. **SULE:** **(unsure)** Oh, really? And what will you do if the European lifeguards aren’t there save you from drowning?
9. **FARAHANI:** Swim! Swim like I’ve never swum before.
(contemplating) Ah... Europe: so near, and yet so far.

Even his brush with death doesn’t seem to have put Farahani off. Will he really risk his life again trying to get to Europe? We’ll soon find out. But first

let's travel south to another part of the continent and join Linda's parents, who are having a drink together after supper. Mr Maraga is already worrying about his daughter, and wondering how she's getting on in Europe.

SCENE TWO: MARAGA FAMILY AT HOME AFTER SUPPER

SFX: clinking of glasses, pouring liquid into glasses, with evening atmo from outside (crickets)

10. MRS. MARAGA: **(sipping her drink)** You worry too much, my dear. It's not good for your health. Linda said she was fine. That should be enough to calm our nerves.

11. MR. MARAGA: **(worried)** No... she didn't sound fine. I know my daughter. And who is this friend she talked about? It's her first day on a foreign continent and she's already found a friend?

12. MRS. MARAGA: Linda is a very sociable girl. She's also very pretty. It's hardly surprising that she makes friends easily.

13. MR. MARAGA: **(annoyed)** You just don't get it, do you? Our daughter is in Europe to study, not to make friends! She has enough of those here at home.

14. MRS. MARAGA: All right, my dear, you've made your point. All I'm saying is that Linda is not a child any more. She's old enough, and sensible enough, to decide things for herself. And I trust her to know perfectly well

what’s expected of her.

- 15. MR. MARAGA :** I just have a feeling that something isn’t right. We shouldn't have sent her Europe. She wasn't ready. Three years! How will she cope for such a long time? What if she falls sick? Who will take care of her? What if something happens to her? I would never forgive myself.
- 16. MRS. MARAGA:** Now, come along. Stop imagining the worst. Our girl is going to be fine. It's her very first day away from home - no wonder she sounds a bit sad. She needs time to adjust, to adapt to the European way of life. Why are you giving up on her already, after all the sacrifices we made to send her there?
- 17. MR. MARAGA:** I’ll only be able to relax when I’ve spoken to her again. The connection was too bad last time for us to talk properly.
- 18. MRS. MARAGA:** Fine. Then let's wait to speak to her, but in the meantime let's give her some space and stop worrying when there’s nothing to worry about. Worrying only makes things harder. I don’t suppose you’ve told her yet that we don’t have the money to pay for her next two years of university?
- 19. MR. MARAGA:** No. I haven't. How could I? But she’s a clever girl. She’ll soon figure it out. She’ll find a way to finish

her studies. Once she’s started, she won’t want to give up...

20. NARRATOR: It’s true that Linda enjoys her studies in international law, but her mother is wrong to think she will quickly settle in. The first four months in Europe feel like the longest four months of her life. To make matters worse, her spending money has almost run out, the dreaded European winter has arrived, she doesn’t have a warm winter coat, and the student accommodation is freezing. Let’s join Linda now in the university cyber café, where she’s chatting with Chivasi, her fiancé.

SCENE THREE: LINDA AND CHIVASI TALKING ONLINE

(In this dialogue there are background typing sfx every time Linda and Chivasi speak, as if chatting and reading out loud what they’re typing)

21. SFX: TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD

22. CHIVASI: **(reads out what he is typing)** Hello, my wife-to-be... **(giggles)**

23. LINDA: **(reads out as she replies)** Hello, my husband-to-be... **(chuckles)**

- 24. CHIVASI:** How are your studies? Are the Europeans treating you well?
- 25. LINDA:** Studies are fine. Yes, Europeans are fine too. How are you?
- 26. CHIVASI:** Not good. Missing you like crazy. These four months feel like four years. Some good news, though - I got a job, as a junior engineer.
- 27. LINDA:** Congrats, my dear! So happy for you! And they say there are no jobs at home.
- 28. CHIVASI:** Jobs are scarce. You need good qualifications. I was lucky.
- 29. LINDA:** No, not lucky. You were the right person for the job.
- 30. CHIVASI:** How are you doing financially? Do you need any help? I know Europe can be expensive, especially for students.
- 31. LINDA:** No, I don't need any help. I'm doing fine. Really. You have enough on your shoulders already.
- 32. CHIVASI:** Well, if you do, just let me know. **(mockingly)** Africa can send aid to Europe too...

33. LINDA: (laughs out loud) LOL, very funny. Got to go now, Chivasi. Sorry.

34. CHIVASI: (pleading) Already? Can't I see you on the webcam? It's been four months...

35. LINDA: Sorry dear, no cam on this computer. Be patient. Talk to you tomorrow. Love you.

36. CHIVASI: (sadly) Love you too. Take care.

37. SFX: LOGGING OUT OF AN ONLINE CHATTING WEBSITE

38. NARRATOR: Linda logs out and bows her face in shame. She has just told her first lies to the man she claims to love and wants to marry. The truth is: first, she desperately needs money; second, she isn't going anywhere right now, and third, the computer she's on does in fact have a webcam. After spending time with a few other students from Africa, Linda's come to realize that almost all migrants prefer to keep their problems, sorrows and difficulties to themselves. She's beginning to understand why Flo advised her never to tell the truth to people back home. Linda gets up from the computer, goes to a public phone booth, and takes out Florence's number.

SCENE THREE: LINDA CALLS FLORENCE FROM PHONE BOOTH

39. SFX: DIALLING NUMBERS - 'BEEP' SOUND FROM TELEPHONE BOOTH

- 40. FLORENCE:** (answers call) Hello, Florence speaking.
- 41. LINDA:** (sorrowful) Hi Flo, it's Linda. Remember me?
- 42. FLORENCE:** (excited) Ah! Linda. The international lawyer - how could I forget you? Are you okay? You sound a bit sad.
- 43. LINDA:** Hmm... where can I start. Well, I've been in Europe studying for four months now, and I'm learning so much; but... Florence, life here is just too expensive! I see my fellow students going out every weekend, while I'm stuck in my room as if I've been left behind to guard the place. They eat out all the time; I can't afford to! They have nice dresses, and I've been wearing the same clothes ever since I came. I don't even have a proper winter coat.
- 44. FLORENCE:** Aren't your parents supporting you with pocket money?
- 45. LINDA:** No, they're not. I know they can't, even though they haven't said so. I know they've spent all their savings to pay for my studies here. I've just been chatting with my... (hesitates) ...my boyfriend. He's got a new job. But I can't ask him for money. Or... well, what do you think?

46. FLORENCE: No! Don't ask him. He's in Africa, Linda. People there need help more than people here. Besides, why do you think I told you never to tell them the truth?

47. LINDA: **(answers)** Because people back home won't believe me. They won't understand.

48. FLORENCE: Precisely! People back home don't care if you're a penniless student, or homeless and living on the street - as long as you're in Europe, they believe you've made it! Linda, listen - don't you worry. We'll think of a way out. Forget about your boyfriend. Look, I can give you a little cash, as a friend, to buy yourself some clothes, cosmetics and stuff. Let's meet up and see what we can do. You're in Europe, remember! This is where every African dreams of coming.

49. LINDA: **(so happy)** Oh, Florence! What can I say? I'm so, so grateful. It's so generous of you - I don't know how I can ever repay you.

50. FLORENCE: Don't mention it, Linda. Call me again tomorrow and we'll arrange a meeting. See you!

51. LINDA: Bye, Flo.

52. SFX: PHONE RECEIVER PLACED BACK ON THE CRADLE

OUTRO:

When Linda puts down the phone, for the first time since she came to Europe she's really smiling. Not only has Florence promised to help her out with some cash, she suggested meeting up to discuss how Linda could earn some extra money. So what ideas does Florence have? Remember - she told Linda to forget about Chivasi. Will Linda follow her advice?

We'll have to find that out next time, because we've reached the end of this sixth episode of our radio drama about migration from Africa to Europe. You're welcome to share your opinions, suggestions and comments about illegal migration by sea by visiting our Facebook page, [facebook.com/dw.lbe](https://www.facebook.com/dw.lbe). You can listen to this episode again, or any of the others on this or different topics, on our Learning by Ear website: dw-world.de/destinationeurope. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Until next time - goodbye.