

LEARNING BY EAR 2011

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

EPISODE TWELVE: “Asylum Granted, Asylum Denied”

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List of characters by scene:

SCENE ONE: CHIVASI’S SHIP DOCKS AT A EUROPEAN PORT

- Chivasi (m, 22)
- Frontex guard (m, 40)

SCENE TWO: FLORENCE AND LINDA AT CHARLES' HOUSE

- Linda (f, 20)
- Florence (f, 35)
- Charles (m, 45)

SCENE THREE: CHIVASI AND FARAHANI MEET AT THE DETENTION

CENTRE FOR ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

- **Chivasi (m, 22)**
- **Farahani (m, 19)**
- **Camp officer (m, 40)**
- **Immigration officer (m, 40)**

INTRO:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear. We're on the twelfth episode of this radio drama, called “**The Promised Land – A Story of African Migration to Europe**”. Farahani has been in a detention centre for illegal migrants since he was picked up off the coast of Europe a week ago. The conditions inside are so bad that, in our last episode, Farahani decided to organize a hunger strike. He and the other illegal migrants hope this will persuade the authorities to hear their cases and grant them asylum. Meanwhile, Linda the aspiring law student has returned to Europe after a short holiday and discovered that immigration officials have been to see her fake husband, Charles. To make matters worse, Linda's mother called to tell her that her father had been hit by a car and was in intensive care. Linda was so shocked that she fainted on the spot. Meanwhile, her fiancé Chivasi is trying to sneak into Europe to be with the girl he loves. He paid a human trafficker to hide him on board a cargo ship. Will Chivasi make it to the “promised land”? Stay tuned for today's episode, “**Asylum Granted, Asylum Denied**”. We join the story as Chivasi's ship arrives in the very same port where Farahani entered Europe.

SCENE ONE: CHIVASI'S SHIP DOCKS AT A EUROPEAN PORT

1. SFX: LOUD HOOT OF A SHIP ABOUT TO DOCK

2. FRONTEX GUARD: (orders) I think we should check this ship. It's coming back from delivering aid to Africa. Bring in the sniffer dogs.

3. SFX: DOGS SNIFFING

4. FRONTEX GUARD: Let the dogs check those empty boxes and crates over there.

5. SFX: DOGS START BARKING LOUDLY

6. FRONTEX GUARD: Hm. The dogs have found something suspicious in those crates. Open them.

7. SFX: WOODEN BOXES BEING RIPPED OPEN

8. FRONTEX GUARD: (shouts) We have some illegals here! (aside) Come on, out you come. Slowly now. Don't be scared, we won't hurt you.

9. CHIVASI: (hungry and thirsty) Water - please! Please, give me some water...

10. FRONTEX GUARD: (orders) Bring some water here! Quickly! Then get their names and send them to the detention centre.

11. NARRATOR: Chivasi and the other illegal migrants are given food and water at the dock. Then they're all taken to the same detention centre where our North African friend Farahani is being held while the authorities consider his application for asylum. Meanwhile, Linda has recovered from her fainting fit, and is asking Florence what her mother said on the phone.

SCENE TWO: FLORENCE AND LINDA AT CHARLES' PLACE

- 12. FLORENCE:** Phew! Linda, you gave me such a fright.
- 13. LINDA:** I'm sorry; I didn't mean to. My dad - how is...?
- 14. FLORENCE:** Your dad needs an operation immediately. Your mother told me I should ask you to send them money. They need it urgently for the hospital bill.
- 15. LINDA:** But where will I get it from? I just got back from my trip home; I spent all my money there. I have no savings left.
- 16. FLORENCE:** Don't worry - I'll help you.
- 17. LINDA:** **(excited)** Really?! Oh Flo, that's wonderful! Thank you so much. I don't know how I can ever repay you.
- 18. FLORENCE:** Stop studying and come and work full time at the club. You'll earn more money, and then you can help your parents back home.
- 19. LINDA:** But... but I need to study for my degree... I won't be able to do that if I work more hours.

- 20. FLORENCE:** Linda, you can always go back to your studies. But your job... hmm, well, you never know. The few months you worked here were enough to buy you everything you have now, and even to pay for a holiday back home. Not many African students manage that. Think about it.
- 21. LINDA:** Flo, can you tell Charles that I won't be able to pay him this month for the marriage papers? I feel really bad about it, but there's so much going on right now. I'll have to send money to my parents... I just don't know what to do.
- 22. FLORENCE:** **(calls out)** Charlie! Can you come here for a minute?
- 23. CHARLES:** Yes, what is it now?
- 24. FLORENCE:** Linda can't pay you this month. She's going to have to send money to pay for her father's operation. But she'll pay you next month as usual. Won't you, Linda?
- 25. CHARLES:** **(unhappy)** This is the last time I'm doing this, Florence. No more fake marriages.
- 26. LINDA:** What...? **(PAUSE)** What do you mean? Has Charles has been married before?

27. FLORENCE: Yes, he’s my ex-husband. We were married for five years. Now we own the club where you work, and we help people like you who need papers to settle and work in Europe. You’re his fifth wife so far.

28. LINDA: **(bewildered)** What?! You’re not serious!

29. NARRATOR: At last Linda is beginning to understand what kind of racket she’s involved in. It’s sheer luck that the authorities haven’t uncovered it before. But how long will that last? Meanwhile, at the detention centre, Chivasi is given a briefing by officials on how things work there, after which they take him to the dorm where he’ll be living for the foreseeable future. One of the men he’s sharing with is Farahani.

SCENE THREE: CHIVASI AND FARAHANI MEET AT THE DETENTION CENTRE FOR ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

30. SFX: ELECTRIC BELL RINGING TO SIGNAL LUNCHTIME

31. CHIVASI: Hello, my name is Chivasi Ja---

32. FARAHANI: That's enough!

33. CHIVASI: I beg your pardon?

34. FARAHANI: One name is enough. I am Farahani. People only use one name in here.

35. CHIVASI: Okay, my name is Chivasi, and I'm from...

36. FARAHANI: **(shocked)** Are you out of your mind? Don't ever say where you come from. That's taboo in here! No second name, and no country!

37. CHIVASI: All right, I'm sorry. I didn't know about those rules... Isn't that the bell for lunch? How come you people are all still lying on your beds?

38. FARAHANI: We're on hunger strike. We want them to hear our asylum requests. They told us today that they're going to bring in immigration officials who will listen to our stories. Then together with a judge they'll decide whether we qualify for asylum or not.

- 39. CHIVASI:** But I thought in Europe they gave shelter, food, money, and asylum to everyone who asks... So that isn't true, then? What story do you have to tell them to get asylum? Do you think I stand a chance?
- 40. FARAHANI:** Depends. What *is* important, though, is that you stick to your story. Don't tell them one thing one day and another the next. They'll either send you straight back or keep you here for a long, long time. My story is that I come from a war zone in the Middle East, and I escaped to Europe to find safety.
- 41. CHIVASI:** Ah, okay. But are you really from the Middle East?
- 42. FARAHANI:** (**whispers**) That's none of your business. You work on your story. They'll be here any time now.
- 43. CHIVASI:** But I can't say I'm from the Middle East! It's obvious that I'm not, from the way I look, and from my accent. Can't I tell them I'm escaping poverty and hopelessness?
- 44. FARAHANI:** We all are. But as far as I know that's not a good enough reason for them to give you asylum. You have to say, for example, that you were being persecuted because of your religious beliefs, or that there was ethnic cleansing where you came from.

45. CHIVASI: But... but my country is peaceful. There was some trouble after the elections, and there's very high unemployment, but normally we don't have any serious problems.

46. FARAHANI: Then you shouldn't be here. If you have no problems, why did you risk your life to get here?

47. CHIVASI: (**shy**) Actually, I did it for my fiancée. I promised her I would cross the ocean to prove my love for her.

48. FARAHANI: You what?!

49. SFX: METAL BARRICADED DOOR OPENS

50. CAMP OFFICER: You - the one who incited the others not to eat. Come on - follow me, the immigration official is waiting. The rest of you can still go down and have lunch if you want to.

51. CHIVASI: I have a question, sir. Am I allowed to make a phone call?

52. CAMP OFFICER: You're new here and already you want to make a call? To whom? A friend who's also here illegally? No, no, my friend - you'll stay here in detention until you can prove to us that you really deserve asylum. When you've been granted asylum, *then* you can talk to whoever you want.

53. NARRATOR: Farahani's brain is working overtime as he goes through his story in his mind over and over again. He knows that this is his only chance - it's make or break for him. Stay in Europe, or be deported back to Africa. Let's listen in to his interrogation by the immigration official.

54. SFX: FILE BEING OPENED

55. IMM.OFFICER: So, young man, you want to claim asylum here in my country. Can you tell me why?

56. FARAHANI: I believe I will be safe here. I've been dodging bullets for most of my life, but here I can finally sleep in peace.

57. IMM.OFFICER: You've been dodging bullets? From whom? And where?

58. FARAHANI: **(hesitant)** In my country we have had no peace for as long as I can remember. The government has been fighting armed militias, and many of my family members have been killed in this conflict.

59. IMM.OFFICER: It says here that you come from the Middle East. Is that right?

60. FARAHANI: Yes, that's right, sir.

61. IMM.OFFICER: You speak Arabic, then?

62. FARAHANI: Yes, of course. It is my mother tongue. I learned English in school, but at home with my parents we always spoke Arabic.

63. IMM. OFFICER: Hmm. I'll ask my colleague to come and interview you later. He's a Middle East expert, and he speaks fluent Arabic. He'll be able to tell from your accent exactly where you're from.

64. FARAHANI: No problem.

65. IMM. OFFICER: So how did you get here? To Europe, I mean, not this detention centre.

66. FARAHANI: We fled the war-torn country where I was born, and walked for days and days until we met someone who took us to a port in North Africa. Once we got there, we paid someone else to take us across to Europe by boat. He was supposed to take us all the way, but when we got within sight of the shore, he told us to jump in and swim... I swam for hours before I was rescued by the border guards. Then I was brought here.

67. SFX: SCRIBBLING ON PAPER

68. IMM. OFFICER: Hmm. You must be one of the ones they picked up in the sea a couple of weeks ago. I heard about that. 20 people drowned, didn't they?

69. FARAHANI: Yes, sir. Only a few of us survived.

70. IMM. OFFICER: Well, I've made a note of your story. This was just a preliminary hearing. My colleague will come later and ask you some more detailed questions. You should be aware that if we find out that you have lied in anything you've told me so far, your asylum request will be rejected and you will be deported back to where you came from. That's all for now.
(calls out) Next, please!

OUTRO:

One by one, the migrants come in to tell their stories, some real, some fictional, of how they managed to escape their countries. Chivasi is the last to come in. How will he handle the test? Join us next time to find out.

If you'd like to listen to this episode again, just go online to dw-world.de/destinationeurope. You can also share your comments, opinions and experiences regarding the asylum process in Europe by visiting our Facebook page, facebook.com/dw.lbe

Until we meet again, bye bye and take care.