

## **Learning by Ear**

### **“Once upon a time... in Africa”**

#### **Episode One: “CRADLE OF MANKIND”**

**Author:** Marta Barroso

**Editors:** Maja Braun, Jan-Philipp Scholz

#### **CHARACTERS :**

Intro/Outro (female/male)

#### **Scene 1:**

- Mum (38, female)
- June (13, female)
- Grandpa (77, male)

#### **Scene 2:**

- June (13, female)
- Linda (13, female)

#### **Scene 3:**

- Grandpa (77, male)
- Mum (38, female)
- June (13, female)
- Dad (40, male)

#### **Scene 4:**

- Mum (38, female)
- June (13, female)

- Baby (1, male)
- Linda (13, female)
- Women (all ages)
- Men (all ages)
- Dad (40, male)

Scene 5:

- June (13, female)
- Mum (38, female)
- Dad (40, male)
- Grandpa (77, male)

**Intro:**

Hello and welcome to this new “Learning by Ear” series called “Once upon a time... in Africa”! In these programs, which focus on African History, we will follow June and her family. June is very good at school but always prefers to listen to her grandpa Peter’s stories instead of helping her mother, Emily, with the household duties. Grandpa Peter is a retired journalist and has a story for every occasion. Emily, the mother, takes care of the house, the chickens and the goats. Both June’s elder brothers, Francis and Stephen, are working in the city of Bonairi to earn some extra money to help the family. And her father, Charles, works on the field from sunrise to sunset. While we get some snapshots of the family’s present day life in the village of Mbazi, the stories of grandpa take them, in each episode, to a different chapter of African History.

In this first episode, June, who is celebrating her thirteenth birthday, wants to hear from grandpa if the first children in the world also celebrated their birthdays. Stay with us and find out how human life began a long, long, time ago...

**Music 1, then cross fade with SFX**

**First Scene: In the kitchen late afternoon.**

**SFX: Kitchen (pots, fire); in the background: chickens, goats, birds, then fade under**

**1. Grandpa:** Singing Happy Birthday song (**June giggling**)

**2. Mum:** (**from a distance**) Come on, come on! We'll get to the music later! June, come take care of the fire while I pluck the chicken! The fact that it's your birthday doesn't mean you don't have to work! Come on!

**Cross fade of mum's voice with June talking to Grandpa**

**3. June:** Grandpa, did your grandpa also tell you so many stories when you were thirteen?

**4. Grandpa:** (**laughing**) Of course, my dear! That's how news spread at that time!

- 5. June:** And how was everything when you were thirteen?
- 6. Grandpa:** Oh, things were quite different then!
- 7. June:** Really? And when your grandpa was thirteen, were things even more different then? And the grandpa of your grandpa and the grandpa of the grandpa of **(shocked)** of your grandpa, how was everything when they were thirteen? And before them? And even before? **(laughs)**
- 8. Grandpa:** Before them, and before and before... everything was veee-ry different! Like... in Lucy's time! Do you know who Lucy was? **(June: Hmhm!, like saying "No")** Lucy is the oldest remains found of a hominid, a species that preceded the humans. She's said to have lived around three million years ago. And because Lucy lived in Ethiopia, Africa is said to be the cradle of mankind, the place in the world where human life began!
- 9. June:** llllhhhh! Really?! **(pause)** Grandpa, would you also kill a chicken for mum to cook and us all to eat at my birthday, if we lived a long, long time ago, like in Lucy's time?

- 10. Grandpa:** If we lived in Lucy's time, we wouldn't celebrate your birthday, dear!
- 11. June:** **(disillusioned)** No?!
- 12. Grandpa:** Imagine today is not today but a long, long time ago. Let's say we're in the Stone Age, which came about a million years after Lucy had lived in Ethiopia! **(pause)** If you had lived in the Stone Age, you wouldn't have had anyone to tell you stories. And do you know why?
- 13. June:** **(curious)** Why, grandpa?
- 14. Grandpa:** **(whispering)** Because, although you are still young, at that time you were almost adult and you would do everything the adults of your camp did.
- 15. June:** **(whispering)** Grandpa, tell me: does June from the Stone Age also have a mother who always tells her to do this and to do that?
- 16. Grandpa:** **(serious)** Little girl, respect towards the elders is a very important thing!
- 17. June:** **(serious)** I'm sorry...

**18. Grandpa:** Look, June from the Stone Age is now going with her friend... What's your best friend's name again...?

**19. June:** Linda!

**20. Grandpa:** Ok, she is going with her Stone Age friend Linda to fetch some water from the river to cook some food. And on their way, they pick some fruit. Well, usually...

### **Flashback Music**

### **Second Scene: On the way to the river.**

**SFX: Footsteps of two people on gravel path, meditative murmurs, footsteps stop, someone stirring in the bush. In the background: birds, then fade under**

**21. June:** Hummm... Strange! There should be more ripe fruit by this time...

**22. Linda:** You're right, June! **(worried)** What shall we take back for us to eat? If our dads and brothers don't come back from hunting, we're going to run out of food!

**SFX: Someone slowly stirring in the bush, picking some fruit. In the background: birds, then fade under**

**23. June:** Come on, Linda, don't let yourself down! We pick this fruit and then we look for some roots. And we can still catch some insects! We won't starve, you'll see!

**SFX: Someone slowly stirring in the bush, picking some fruit. In the background: birds, then fade under**

**24. Linda:** **(surprised)** Look at this fruit! I've never seen any like this! We could try it...

**25. June:** No, Linda! It's better to pick them all and show them to Etu back at the camp. She always knows what we can eat.

**26. Linda:** You're right! It wasn't that long ago that someone died of eating something poisonous...

**SFX: Someone slowly stirring in the bush, picking some fruit. In the background: birds, then fade under**

**27. Linda:** So, we've got everything! Let's go down to the river now!

**28. June:** **(laughing)** Come on, then! The one who arrives first, gets a fruit!

**SFX: June running, Linda approaches, then two people running, then stop. In the background: birds, then fade under**

**29. June:** **(laughing, breathless)** It seems the river gets further away every day!

**30. Linda:** **(breathless)** Yes! Before the men went out to hunt I heard my mother say that the river was drying up...

## **Flashback Music**

### **Third Scene: At home late afternoon.**

**SFX: Kitchen (pots, fire). In the background: chickens, goats, birds, then fade under**

- 31. Grandpa:** And afterwards, June and Linda wash themselves in the river and return to the camp. And the men, who have been away to hunt for many days, also arrive...
- 32. Mum:** **(from a distance)** Father, don't you think that's enough stories for today?
- 33. June:** **(speaking loudly)** Muu-mmm!!! Just a little bit more! **(talking to grandpa)** Grandpa, why is it called Stone Age actually?
- 34. Grandpa:** Because it was in this period that human beings began creating tools out of stone. They also used wood, bones, shells... but stone was the most modern material at that time! The Stone Age was only one of many periods of Pre-History.
- 35. June:** **(proud)** Which came before History, right, Grandpa? **(Grandpa: Hmhm!, like saying "Yes")** Because human beings couldn't write then!
- 36. Grandpa:** Exactly!
- 37. June:** And when was that, Grandpa? It must have been a looong time ago!

**38. Grandpa:** It was! It is said to have begun in Africa about two and a half million years ago.

**39. June:** Grandpa, if Lucy lived in Ethiopia, where did June from the Stone Age live?

**40. Grandpa:** Well, you could have lived in Ethiopia, too...

**SFX: Door opens, footsteps, door closes, footsteps coming closer, kitchen (pots, fire). In the background: chickens, goats, birds, then fade under**

**41. Mum:** Charles! Glad you're home! Tell your daughter to come fry the bananas!

**42. Dad:** Ah, woman, it's her birthday! One day in the year! **(amused)** And you know how food turns out when June cooks! **(talking to Grandpa)** Hello, Father!

**43. Grandpa:** **(from a distance)** Good evening, Charles!

**SFX: Footsteps coming nearer, then stop, kitchen (pots, fire). In the background: chickens, goats, birds, then fade under**

**44. Dad:** Good evening, Peter! **(talking to June)**  
Darling, happy birthday! **(kisses June)** I see  
that you're already listening to grandpa's  
stories... What have I been missing?

**45. June:** Hi Dad! Sit here. Now you come in the story!  
**(happy)** Go on, Grandpa!

**SFX: Dad sits down, tired, murmuring, kitchen (pots, fire). In the  
background: chickens, goats, birds, then fade under**

**46. Grandpa:** Well, as I was saying... **(amused)** we're in  
the Stone Age! And the men are arriving back  
at the camp...

**Flashback music**

**Fourth Scene: At the camp.**

**SFX: A baby cries out. In the background: women talking, birds,  
then fade under**

**47. Mum:** June, are you ready with the brew? Your baby brother has to eat something!

**SFX: Someone scraping two stones on one another. In the background: women talking, footsteps, birds, then fade under**

**48. June:** No, Mum! I'm still trying to light the fire! I'll bring you the brew as soon as I can!

**49. Linda:** **(shouting, from a distance, enthusiastic)**  
They're here! The men are back!

**June stands up and runs to join Linda**

**SFX: Footsteps running on gravel path. In the background: women talking, footsteps slowly approaching on gravel path, birds, then fade under**

**50. June:** **(shouting from a distance)** Hiihhh, mum!  
They're carrying a strange animal!

**SFX: Footsteps from various people slowly approaching on gravel path, pulling an animal. In the background: women talking, birds, then fade under**

**Men murmuring, tired**

**June runs to join the men**

**SFX: Footsteps running on gravel path. In the background: footsteps slowly approaching on gravel path, women talking, birds, then fade under**

**51. June:** Dad, I'm so glad you're here. The baby's hungry!

**52. Dad:** **(worried, meditative)** Now we're all going to eat, daughter!

**SFX: Footsteps from various people slowly approaching on gravel path, pulling an animal, then stop. In the background: women and men talking, birds, then fade under**

**53. Mum:** Huhhh, what a face, man! Didn't it go well at the hunting?

**54. Dad:** It was difficult, woman! The animals are leaving. We haven't had anything to eat for days! **(Mum: Hmhm!, like saying "Yes")** If it goes on like this, the baby will get hungry again!

**55. Mum:** So, what did you decide to do?

**56. Dad:** **(sighing)** Ah, woman, woman! **(pause)** We have to leave and look for a place where the water still runs in the rivers and the animals are more plentiful! Tomorrow we move on!

**Flashback music**

**Fifth Scene: At home in the evening.**

**SFX: Kitchen (pots, fire, kerosene lamp, bananas frying). In the background: crickets, then fade under**

**57. June:** Grandpa, why do they have to go away if the men found an animal to eat?

**58. Mum:** **(from a distance)** June!

**59. Dad:** **(speaking loudly)** Woman, let the child alone! Just a little bit longer!

**60. Mum:** **(from a distance, muttering)** It's like I say...  
There is nobody helping me...

**61. Grandpa:** But for how long can one animal feed the  
whole camp? Don't forget, there are like thirty  
people living together there!

**62. Mum:** **(from a distance)** Have you finished?  
**(Pause)** June!

**63. Grandpa:** **(speaking loudly)** Yes, we're finished for  
now! **(talking to June)** Now, go help Mum,  
otherwise we won't get anything for dinner!

**Outro:**

And this is the end of the first episode of "Once upon a time... in Africa"  
the new "Learning by Ear" series about African History! What do you  
think? In the Stone Age, was life easier than now?

You can listen to this or other "Learning by Ear" episodes again and write  
your comments about the program by visiting our website at:

[www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe)

Good-bye and until next time!