

Learning by Ear 2010

Series: Shall I tell you something? African Fables for a culture of peace

Episode: 10 The monkey and the tortoise

Author: Ibrahima Ndiaye

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SHALL I TELL YOU SOMETHING? AFRICAN FABLES FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

EPISODE 10: „THE MONKEY AND THE TORTOISE“

AUTHOR: IBRAHIMA NDIAYE

**EDITORS: YANN DURAND, STEFANIE DUCKSTEIN,
NAÏMA GUIRA**

TRANSLATION: NATALIE GLANVILLE-WALLIS

PROOFREADING: TONY DUNHAM

CHARACTERS:

1. NARRATOR (male, 40 years old at least)
2. TORTOISE (female, about 20)
3. MONKEY (male, about 20)
4. ELEPHANT (male, about 40 or older)
5. BUTTERFLY (female, about 20)

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INTRO / PRESENTER:

Hello and a warm welcome to all our dear Learning by Ear friends. Unfortunately, we have to start with some bad news, because this is the tenth and last episode in our series about African fables for a culture of peace. But never mind! And as it is the very last, we hope it will be a very entertaining one. We are going to hear all about a quarrel between two very different animals. One is very cheeky and the other is very hard working. Listen in now to: „The monkey and the tortoise“.

1. MUSIC (play as background for the entire script)

2. NARRATOR:

In the animal kingdom, one year it happened that the rainy season was so generous, everyone dreamed that the harvest was going to be the biggest they had ever experienced.

3. SFX: Strikes of a hoe

4. NARRATOR:

The tortoise, who had worked relentlessly in her field, had a very good harvest. She proudly reaped marrow, pineapples and many sweet potatoes. However, she was not quite satisfied.

5. TORTOISE (complaining to herself):

“Oh! If only I could have some maize as well! A little variety would be good for me! Now, I have to go to the market to exchange some of my products for some maize. “

6. NARRATOR:

Carrying her heavy basket on her back with difficulty, she was walking under the oppressive sun, when, suddenly, she heard the babbling of a brook nearby, and this immediately got her attention.

7. SFX: Swashing water

8. NARRATOR:

She was not able to resist. She put her basket down by the side of the road and crept through the undergrowth all the way to the stream, in order to quench her thirst. And who was crossing the road at the very moment that the tortoise left her basket? No other than the mischievous monkey.

9. MONKEY:

“Hahahaha” (**mischievous laughing**) “Oh! What luck!”
(**monkey rubbing his hands**)

10. NARRATOR:

The monkey rubbed his hands together with glee over the sight of the basket abandoned there. He wickedly stole the basket and immediately climbed up the next tree to enjoy his booty enthusiastically.

When the tortoise returned from the stream, she could not believe her eyes: her basket had disappeared. She was very angry.

11. TORTOISE (horrified):

“I-I-It’s unbelievable ! I-I-It is impossible. It was here just a few moments ago, and now it has disappeared! What a horrible thing to happen. But I can’t see anyone around who could have stolen it! Nevertheless, I know I am not imagining things!”

12. BUTTERFLY:

“Hihihi, really? Are you sure?”

13. NARRATOR:

Along came a little butterfly who had witnessed the whole scene.

14. TORTOISE:

“Oh, Miss Butterfly, of course I am sure. Did you see anybody?”

15. BUTTERFLY:

“Take a look up there!”

16. NARRATOR:

The tortoise looked up the tree and could not believe her eyes. The monkey, sitting on a branch, was greedily and noisily eating everything that she had spent so much time and effort harvesting. He had already eaten up many sweet potatoes and half a marrow.

17. TORTOISE (screaming):

“Stop that immediately! That basket and all its contents belong to me.”

18. MONKEY (sniggering):

“Sorry, I do not know what you are talking about. I found this basket abandoned on the path.”

19. TORTOISE (shouting exasperated):

“But I only laid it down because I was so desperately thirsty! And if you do not give it back to me immediately, I will take the case to our judge, the elephant.”

20. MONKEY:

“I’m not stopping you. **(keeps on eating, talking on with a mouthful of food)** I know the law, and it states the following: He who finds an object on the path, is allowed to keep it. That’s how it goes, the found object belongs to he who finds it. Finders, keepers.”

21. NARRATOR:

At these words, the tortoise began to think. She thought so hard she felt hot under her shell and began to sweat profusely. That evening, she paid a visit to the elephant.

She related her case and demanded justice. The butterfly and a lizard appeared as witnesses, for they had been at the scene. And of course the monkey was there too but he would have none of it:

22. MONKEY:

“In this case, there is no room for discussion. The basket was abandoned on the road. I found it. I kept it. According to the Law of the Savannah, the found object belongs to he who finds it. Finders, keepers. Is that true or not, elephant?”

23. ELEPHANT:

“Hmmmmm (**thinking**). Sorry, but I have to admit that the monkey is right. In this actual case, the found object well and truly belongs to he who indeed found it. Forgive me tortoise, I know you worked hard in order to obtain a good harvest, but the monkey is allowed to keep the basket and all its contents.”

24. MONKEY shouts for joy + hysterical cries

25. NARRATOR:

The tortoise remained there, feeling miserable. But soon, she cheered up and decided to pay her sister a visit, hoping that she had a few corncobs left which would be good for her. And so the next morning she set off. After some time she was walking heavily under the burning sun, when she suddenly came across the monkey lying at the side of the road, stuffed with marrow, pineapples and sweet potatoes, and fast asleep, with his tail stretched out.

26. MONKEY: snoring noises

27. NARRATOR :

On seeing this, the tortoise almost fainted. She was so excited. Without hesitating, she took the monkey’s tail in her mouth and went off on her way.

28. TORTOISE (whispering to herself):

“Today, I will show you what the law is and how one respects it!”

29. MONKEY (panic cries):

“Hey! Help, stop thief, stop her! What are you doing with my tail?”

30. NARRATOR:

The tortoise could not answer though, because she wanted to make sure that she would not lose her hold. However, the butterfly who was passing by, shouted from above,

31. BUTTERFLY (laughing):

“Monkey, I have the impression that the tortoise has just found your tail on the road and has decided to keep it! Oh, and look who is coming here. It’s our judge, the elephant!”

32. ELEPHANT: roars sounds

33. ELEPHANT:

“It is true, butterfly, what you say... Of course, monkey, you can take the case to court. However, I warn you, it will be in vain, for here as well, the law of the savannah is valid, just as it was in the case of the tortoise’s basket: the found object belongs to he who finds it first. Finders, keepers. As for you, tortoise, you can now cut off the monkey’s tail. Maybe you can use it later to swat flies.”

34. MONKEY (panic cries):

“No! I beg you. Use my beautiful tail as a flyswatter? Never! Listen, please give me back my tail and I’ll give you your basket back. With an extra bag of sweet potatoes.”

35. ELEPHANT:

“That is not enough to save your tail. You have to give back the aforementioned basket. And in addition a bag of sweet potatoes **and** a bag of maize.”

36. NARRATOR:

Although he was very upset, the monkey had to agree. Smiling broadly, the tortoise let go her grip. She thanked the elephant from the bottom of her heart and went home satisfied.

That evening, her dinner consisted of marrow and sweet potatoes, and she ate with a great appetite, for she was happy that justice had been done. Thus our fable goes to sea, and he who will smell its perfume first, will go to heaven.

37. Music

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OUTRO / PRESENTER:

Well, that served the mischievous monkey right, didn't it? And it shows us, that sometimes you can resolve a quarrel by using the same method that was used against you. And without harming anyone. So, there's a happy end for the honest and hard-working tortoise. And end is the right word, because our fable "The monkey and the tortoise" was the last episode in our series of African fables for a culture of peace. All the stories were written by the Senegalese storyteller, Ibrahima Ndiaye, also called Ibo. He told us in confidence that his grandmother originally told him many of his stories.

If you missed any or want to listen to any or all of them again, just visit our website at: www.dw-world.de/lbe.

We are also very happy to receive your comments via e-mail. What did you think about the fables? Do you think they can help to solve or prevent conflicts in real life situations? Write to: lbe@dw-world.de.

We hope you liked the fables and will tune in for the next Learning by Ear series. Good bye for now, my friends!

END