

Learning by Ear 2010

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

Episode: 06 "A King without a Kingdom".

Author: Ibrahima Ndiaye

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

EPISODE 06: „ A King without a Kingdom“

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CHARACTERS:

1. NARRATOR (female, 40 years old, at least)
2. AMADOU (male, about 20 years old)
3. OLD WOMAN (female, sounding +/- 70 years old)
4. MORIBA (male, about 20 years old)

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INTRO:

Hello and welcome to Episode 6 in our Learning by Ear series "Shall I tell you something? African Fables for a culture of peace".

Fables are traditional tales, stories that have always fascinated young and old alike. They are often good ways of explaining how humans function. Today we are going to witness the return of a child prodigy.

Prick up your ears and listen to the story of „A King without a Kingdom”.

1. MUSIC (plays in background for the entire script)

2. NARRATOR:

A long, long time ago a good King reigned over Saraba, a heavenly country. It was a small kingdom, but its earth was fertile and everybody was happy. One day, the beautiful Queen gave her husband a handsome and strong son who was called Amadou. But the happiness of the royal family was short-lived. Soon after, the King was attacked while he was out hunting. A huge wild cat injured him so badly that he died. He wasn't even buried before rampant speculation started about who was to become his successor. Amadou, the lawful heir to the throne, was still too young. He was promptly ousted from the throne by a cruel dictator and was forced to go into exile far away from the Kingdom of Saraba.

Amadou was not happy about this, but he was too young to fight back and accepted his fate. Many seasons and years went by. Amadou became a handsome and respected young man. He married a virtuous and loving woman named Fatima who gave him beautiful children.

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The young family lived happily and peacefully together until one year a severe drought struck the country.

3. SFX: Wind blows over dry land

4. NARRATOR:

After several months of drought, there was almost nothing left to eat in the country. Amadou feared to lose his beloved wife and children. So he was forced to venture into unknown territory. He hoped there he would be able to find enough to meet his family's needs. And not only that, he decided that it was time to reclaim his throne. Bad enough that he once had been betrayed, but was he not now betraying his own children? They were also entitled to live in dignity. The day before Amadou's departure, Fatima promised to care for their children alone while he was gone.

5. COCK crowing

6. Narrator:

The next day, Amadou set off at dawn. He walked for a long time covering a vast distance. He crossed many rivers and travelled through lots of unfamiliar countries. But Amadou could never earn and save enough to return home to his family. And worse than that he suffered from extreme exhaustion and had to survive many diseases. No matter what he did, he couldn't solve his problems.

One day, he needed to rest and sat in the shade of a large baobab tree where he drank a few sips from his gourd and thought about his life. Amadou was not sure anymore about what his plans should be. Was this the end of all his dreams? Then, exhausted, he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

When he awoke, the sun was going down already. As he set off again, Amadou saw an aged woman in the distance who was dragging herself along the road. The poor old woman looked haggard and thirsty. Amadou immediately went to help her.

7. SFX: Quick footsteps on grass

8. Amadou:

"Old woman, what happened? Come on, I'll help you. Let's go to the large tree over there. You need to rest and get your breath back."

9. Narrator:

Amadou brought the old woman to the tree and sat her beneath it. There, he offered her something to drink and even gave all his food to her. Once she felt better, the old woman said to Amadou:

10. Old woman: drinking sounds

11. Old woman:

"Young man, you saved my life. I was attacked on the way and robbed of everything. But tell me, what are you doing here alone?"

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12. Amadou

"That's a long, long story. You know, life is not easy. I left my home and family to seek my fortune, but here I am now, poorer than ever before!"

13. Old woman:

"You helped me, and now it's my turn to help you. Here is some advice that you must never forget: *Never get into situations you do not master!* Follow my words and your dreams will come true."

14. SFX: Footsteps of the old woman as she leaves

15. Narrator:

Whereupon, the old woman left Amadou without another word. Amadou was surprised and disappointed, but thought that the old woman was probably mad. And then, just a few minutes later, he saw a cloud of dust in the distance.

16. SFX: Galloping horses

17. Narrator:

Soon after, he could make out several horses led by a solitary rider dressed in princely garments and mounted on a beautiful black stallion. The other horses were carrying large saddle-bags full of gold and jewellery. The rider stopped close to Amadou and called him:

18. Moriba:

"Good evening, my friend! My name is Moriba. Who are you?"

19. Amadou (warily)

"Good evening, Sir! My name is Amadou."

20. Moriba:

"I am the youngest son of the King of Saraba, who has just died. But my grief is mild because my father was wicked. My elder brother succeeded him to the throne and he is just as brutal. I inherited the riches you see here and I have decided to leave with all my belongings and seek out other lands."

21. Narrator:

Amadou was so surprised by what he heard and saw, that he didn't even register the name of the kingdom Moriba had just mentioned.

22. Moriba:

"Listen my friend, I am going to make you a good offer. Because of all the riches and jewelry that I am carrying, I am a prime target for robbers or brigands.

Accompany me on my travels and protect me in cases of danger. In exchange, I will give you half of my possessions. I have not yet found anyone whom I can completely trust, but you seem very honest. This is why, as soon as you have sworn your loyalty to me, half of my fortune will be yours."

23. Narrator:

Amadou was trembling with excitement. Was this finally the break he had been looking for?

24. Amadou (surprised, but lucky)

"I am honoured by your offer, Moriba. Yes, I am an honest person and I promise you I will always ride by your side. I swear to be loyal to you."

25. Moriba:

"Saddle up then! I am happy to travel with you. Ride this beautiful mare. From now on, she belongs to you."

26. Narrator:

Amadou climbed into the saddle suddenly feeling light-hearted. For the first time he saw the beauty of the surrounding landscape. He just couldn't believe his luck.

27. Amadou (to himself, joyful):

"I have now a new friend, and soon, I will be reunited with my family and I will be rich."

28. SFX: Galloping horses

29. Narrator:

Over the following weeks the two new friends had many adventures together and Amadou proved himself to be a brave and trustworthy bodyguard.

One day they came to a wide river and had to look a long time for a shallow place to cross.

30. SFX: Torrential river

31. Moriba:

"Amadou, go in the water here to see how deep it is. I don't want to see our gold washed away like driftwood."

32. Amadou

"Yes, Moriba my friend. I am on my way."

33. Narrator:

Amadou could not swim, but nevertheless he wanted to express his gratitude to Moriba, and was about to jump into the water when he remembered the old woman's words: 'Never get into situations you do not master!' He hesitated for some time and then he admitted to Moriba that he had never learned to swim.

34. Moriba (laughing):

"Hahaha, I wanted someone to protect me and all I got is a coward! Oh, why is life always that unfair to me? I have gold in abundance but still have to do everything by myself."

35. SFX: Torrential river

36. Narrator:

So Moriba undressed and went in the water. He could touch the bottom all the way across the river. On the opposite bank, Moriba was encouraging Amadou to cross with the animals, when he was suddenly attacked from behind and killed by a crocodile.

Amadou froze with terror. There was nothing he could do. After he recovered from the shock of losing his friend and had pulled himself together, he then considered what he should do next. He now had immense wealth. He could simply decide to keep it. But was it the right thing to do? Then, suddenly he knew what to do. Moriba had mentioned the kingdom of Saraba! He was therefore the son of the usurper to the throne! Suddenly he realised that Moriba's possessions should be returned to the citizens of Saraba, who had been exploited by that selfish King. He quickly rounded up the animals and set off towards his homeland.

He rode all day and then decided to stop at Malikunda, a neighboring kingdom he knew from his childhood. Samory, the king, and in past times a close friend of Amadou's father, received him well. Amadou told the King what had happened to him and what he planned to do now.

37. Amadou:

"I am on my way to Saraba, the country of my ancestors. I want to give back to the people what was stolen from them."

38. Narrator:

Samory took a liking to Amadou and was moved. He offered him hospitality in his palace, and had the treasures he was carrying guarded and his horses taken care of. A few weeks later, when Amadou had fully recovered from his long journey, Samory offered him an army as reinforcements, as well as a large herd of cattle to help him regain the throne of Saraba.

39. SFX: Sounds cattle, horses, soldiers walking

40. Narrator:

Amadou set off again surrounded by his new army and his animals. They now headed straight to the capital of Saraba. The news of Amadou's return spread rapidly to Moriba's brother's ears. He heard Amadou described as a handsome and valiant man who was willing to share all his wealth with the people of Saraba. He took fright and fled from the palace. As for Amadou, he received a triumphal welcome on his arrival and shortly after, the people recognized him as the new King of Saraba. He addressed them in these words:

41. CROWD : Joyful cheering

42. Amadou

"First of all I want to give my people back what was stolen from them. Take your gold and jewellery and make use of them in a way that serves our whole society!"

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43. CROWD : Joyful cheering

Still in front of the crowd, King Amadou then spoke to one of his servants:

44. Amadou

"Now, send someone to my family to bring them here. I never want to be separated from them again. And also bring my friend King Samory from Malikunda, the old friend of my father. Everyone is invited for a sumptuous feast!"

45. CROWD: Crowd cheering, tam-tam, clapping hands

46. Narrator:

After many years Saraba was once more the heavenly, peaceful country that it used to be. And Amadou and his family indeed were never separated again.

Thus our fable goes to sea, and he who will smell its perfume first, will go to heaven.

47. MUSIC

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OUTRO:

And so ends our fable „A King without a Kingdom“. The story of a man who once lost everything, but got it back again because he helped others and listened to their advice. Did you ever experience a situation where advice really rescued you?

Let us know and send an email to lbe@dw-world.de.

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