

LEARNING BY EAR

“Africa’s physically challenged people”

EPISODE 4: "Disabled but not unable"

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List of characters

Narrator

SCENE ONE: OUTSIDE CHITOTO’S HOMESTEAD

- Tofa (f, 40)
- Fagilio (m, 42)

SCENE TWO: AT OLUANDA’S SCHOOL COMPOUND

- Oluanda (m, 18)
- Pupil (m, 17) just 3 short sentences
- Kangwa (f, 18)

SCENE THREE: TOFA’S VISIT TO THERESA

- Tofa (f, 40)
- Theresa (f, 65)
- Zabibu (f, 15)

SCENE FOUR: AT THE HEADTEACHER’S OFFICE

- Oluanda (m, 18)
- Mrs. Nina (f, 45)

INTRO:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear and the fourth episode of our radio drama entitled, “**Africa’s physically challenged people**”, a story about Africa’s neglected people. In the last episode, Oluanda returned home from hospital but since his accident his attitude had changed dramatically. His friend Magoto reacted strangely after seeing Oluanda on crutches. Kangwa, the girl that all the boys admire, including Oluanda himself, was turned away at the doorstep by Oluanda, shocking Tofa, Oluanda’s mother, even more. So where will the story take us next? Oluanda really wanted to resume school and after several weeks at home nursing his wound, and with Dr. Esther’s permission, he was ready to go back. Tofa had been waiting to confront Chitoto’s father and got the perfect opportunity that same morning.

SCENE ONE: OUTSIDE CHITOTO’S HOMESTEAD

1. ATMO + SFX: **OUTSIDE YARD AMBIENCE, BRUSHING OF
TEETH AND GURLING WITH WATER**

2. TOFA: Fagilio! (**angry**) You and your horrible son will
pay dearly for what you did to my son!

3. SFX: **GURGLED WATER SPAT ON GROUND**

4. FAGILIO: Tofa! Is it you? No that can’t be true...! What is it
with you and my son?

- 5. TOFA:** Oh, so you pretend that you don’t know right?
Well I know what this is about. Jealousy, you are just jealous that my son is better in his studies than yours! Yes, he is now disabled, but not unable. He just left for school. Yes! With one leg and on crutches but his brains are still intact...!
You failed!
- 6. FAGILIO:** **(sarcastic)** And I thought I was the only drunkard around. What in the world are you talking about? Are you sure you are alright?
- 7. TOFA:** **(angry)** Just keep on with the act, but we will see where it will take you. This is not over! Someone has to pay, and that surely won’t be me.
- 8. FAGILIO:** Pay for what? I don’t owe you any money! As a matter of fact, you owe me a drink! I told you the next time you show up here without...
- 9. SFX:** **HURRIED FOOTSTEPS WALK AND FADE AWAY**
- 10. FAGILIO:** Tofa stop! Come back here! **(to himself)** Have I been drunk that long? I don’t remember women turning their back on men when being addressed.

11. NARRATOR: It has been said that the pain of the child can only be understood by the parents. Tofa was such a parent. But would she be able to deal with what was to come? Let’s find out how things have changed for Oluanda now he has resumed school. His schoolmates start teasing him.

SCENE TWO: AT OLUANDA’S SCHOOL COMPOUND

12. ATMO: **SCHOOL YARD AMBIENCE; STUDENTS CHATTERING**

13. SFX: **SCHOOL BELL RINGS**

14. PUPIL: **(mockingly)** Hey Oluanda! The bell has rung hurry up, otherwise by the time you get to class... the lesson will be over.
(Huge laughter from some students)

15. OLUANDA: **(angry)** Don’t tease me, or I will report you to the head teacher.

16. PUPIL: **(chant)** Oluanda, the cripple! Oluanda the cripple!

17. SFX: **CRUTCHES MOVING FAST ON FLOOR**

18. OLUANDA: **(raving angry)** You think you can offend me and get away with it? Come on, face me then!

- 19. SFX:** **STUMBLING AND FALLING DOWN**
(Laughter continues)
- 20. PUPIL:** Poor Oluanda, now you are going to be really late.
- 21. KANGWA:** Oluanda! **(calls out)** Oluanda! Are you alright?
Here let me help you up.
(Act out being lifted up)
- 22. OLUANDA:** **(Embarrassed)** Errr...thank you Kangwa. Go ahead now, I don’t want you to be late.
- 23. KANGWA:** Oh I don’t mind walking with you. Besides we have a free lesson now. Where are your friends?
- 24. OLUANDA:** Who? If you mean Chitoto, Magoto and Karemi then you had better use another word not friends. They have all left me; at least Karemi came to visit me from time to time.
- 25. KANGWA:** I am sorry; by the way it’s so good to have you back. Are you going to take any action against Chitoto? I mean he left you there injured, close to death.
- 26. OLUANDA:** No, it wasn’t his fault. I was totally responsible for all that happened to me. And I just wish that things could go back to the way they were. I miss my friends.

27. NARRATOR: Most disabled people are cut off from social life; friends and sometimes even their very own relatives are ashamed of them. Kangwa however was not like that... But that was only the beginning. Back at home, Tofa needed someone to talk to and she opted to pay her close neighbour, Theresa, a visit. When she arrived, Theresa was in the kitchen preparing lunch. Let’s listen in to their talk.

SCENE THREE: TOFA’S VISIT TO THERESA

28. ATMO: **FOOD FRYING IN PAN**

29. TOFA: I am telling you, Fagilio and his son must be punished. Otherwise, they will keep on destroying the lives of our children. And who knows who will be next?

30. THERESA: I agree with you, but how do we do that? I mean how do we see that justice is done? You are aware that our society hardly gives an ear to women.

31. ZABIBU: Chitoto should apologize to the entire neighborhood, for abandoning Oluanda.

32. TOFA: He would never do that! That boy is like the devil himself.

33. ZABIBU: Then send him to hell! That’s where the devil resides anyway, right grandmother?

(Laughter from Tofa and Theresa)

34. THERESA: Zabibu, would you mind leaving us alone? I will call you when the food is ready.

35. ZABIBU: Yes, grandmother. Can I please go outside?

36. THERESA: Yes, but don’t stay too long. The sun is too hot at this time. Remember your homework too.

37. SFX: **STEPS OF ZABIBU LEAVING**

38. TOFA: Homework? I thought Zabibu was out of school.

39. THERESA: After all the taunting she received from her peers, I took her away from mainstream school. Now she attends the evening classes. But tell me, how is Oluanda? He must be very bitter now!

40. TOFA: How do you know? Did Karemi tell you about the hospital incident?

41. THERESA: No. Let’s just say I have had my experiences too. I will tell you about them later.

42. TOFA: Terrible nightmare! That’s what I can say about this tragic accident. I don’t know what is worse, Oluanda losing his leg, or me slowly losing Oluanda.

43. **THERESA:** You will not lose him; you cannot lose him.
44. **TOFA:** He hates me now, he even chased Kangwa away. All he seems to be interested in is shoes.
45. **THERESA:** **(Surprised)** Shoes?
46. **TOFA:** Shoes. The whole month Oluanda was recovering at home, he did nothing else but fix all my old shoes. **(Tearful)** He told me since he won’t have the privilege to wear a pair of shoes anymore, he might as well fix them.
47. **THERESA:** Hmm.. this is like history repeating itself for me.
48. **TOFA:** What history? Theresa, no one knows what I am going through.
49. **THERESA:** Let’s have lunch now; we have a lot to talk about. **(Calls out)** Zabibu!... Zabibu!
50. **NARRATOR:** Grandmother Theresa was obviously aware of what Tofa was going through. More than that, she knew very well why Oluanda had chosen to occupy himself with fixing shoes, even though he wasn’t a qualified cobbler. At school though, Oluanda didn’t expect what was coming when he was summoned to the head teacher’s office.

SCENE FOUR: HEADTEACHER’S OFFICE

51. SFX: GENTLE KNOCK ON DOOR
52. MRS. NINA: Come in!
53. SFX: DOOR OPENED WITH DIFFICULTY; SOUNDS OF CRUTCHES, ROOM AMBIENCE
54. OLUANDA: Good afternoon Mrs. Nina, you called for me.
55. MRS. NINA: Yes. Sit down Oluanda.
56. SFX: CHAIR PULLED ASIDE; CRUTCHES BEING SET ASIDE
57. OLUANDA: Thank you madam. **(takes a deep breath)**
58. MRS. NINA: How do you feel coming back to school after your accident?
59. OLUANDA: **(Baffled)** I..it’s alright. It’s good to be back.
60. MRS. NINA: Oluanda, several teachers have come to me, now I know this is very hard for you. But I am acting in the interest of all. I am afraid we have to let you go.
61. OLUANDA: **(Shocked)** But why Mrs. Nina? If it’s about me coming late, I will improve; I am still learning how to walk faster with the crutches, Madam.

62. MRS.NINA: No, Oluanda, it’s not about that. How do I put this nicely? We want to protect you from others, besides there are some special schools, maybe your mother can enroll you there. You are a bright student, but your condition is now unique to us and no teacher, including myself, knows how to handle you.

63. OLUANDA: Madam Nina that is precisely what I have been telling my mother. I don’t need any special attention. Yes, I face difficulty with movement now, but overall I am still capable of doing almost everything. I am even learning to fix shoes.

64. MRS. NINA: Shoes?... Whose shoes? Never mind. Oluanda the point is: we can’t have you here anymore. The teachers have agreed, it’s for your own good so you don’t have to face taunts and jokes from other kids. You know that Zabibu, Karemi’s sister also faced a similar situation because of albinism.

65. OLUANDA: But I am still me, the same Oluanda. I don’t know why everyone is now treating me as a complete stranger.

66. MRS. NINA: Please inform your mother of this decision and if she has any questions, she may come and see me. That will be all.

67. OLUANDA: So let me get this straight. The reason I am being expelled from school, is not because of indiscipline or improper conduct but because I am now disabled. Is that it?

68. MRS. NINA: Oluanda, do not try to make me feel guilty! I sympathize with you. But I also have to think of the normal students. Please go home and don’t come again to school.

69. SFX: SCHOOL BELL RINGS

OUTRO:

After the school bell rang, Oluanda took his crutches, stood up and took a long hard look at his head teacher, Mrs. Nina who had buried her face in a bunch of exercise books, didn’t dare to look back at him. With that we have come to the end of the fourth episode of our story entitled “**Africa’s physically challenged people**”. Who will Oluanda turn to now? How will his mother receive this news? And remember Theresa had something to share with Tofa. All this and more in our upcoming episodes.

To listen to this episode or the previous ones already aired, visit www.dw-world.de/lbe.

Until next time, goodbye!