

Learning by Ear – Climate Change

Episode 05

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CHARACTERS:

Scene 1:

- JOSHUA (15)
- ALEX (15)
- DAN MACUMBA – MARINE BIOLOGIST (ABOUT 40)

Scene 2:

- LORNA (16)
- ALEX (15) – via phone
- DOCTOR (40)

Scene 3:

- LORNA (16)
- CAROL (14)
- JOSHUA (15)
- ALEX (15)

Intro:

Welcome to Learning by Ear and Episode Five of our radio drama about climate change.

Things are starting to get a bit nasty as the pro-power plant people try to scare their opponents off. Joshua and Alex meet an oceanographer and Lorna finds out how climate change and disease are linked.

Find out more now as we listen to Episode Five.

Scene One: Beach

SFX ATMO: BEACH, WAVES

1. ALEX: I'm so relieved it's stopped raining for a bit and we can get out for a walk.

2. JOSHUA: Yeah, me too. We were lucky that the cyclone didn't reach us in the end.

3. ALEX: I know. Hey, Josh, look at that coral. I'm sure I remember the coral being really cool bright colours when we were a bit younger and used to go out looking for little fish.

4. JOSHUA: You're right. It's completely white and looks dead now. Look, what's that man doing over there? He seems to be cutting off some of the coral.

5. ALEX: Hey stop, you can't do that!

SFX: **RUNNING THROUGH THE WATER**

6. DAN MACUMBA: Don't worry. I'm just cutting off a small bit to do some tests. My name is Dan Macumba. I'm a marine biologist and I'm doing a study about coral reefs.

7. ALEX: Really? Am I going mad or did the coral used to be a totally different colour?

8. DAN MACUMBA: You're quite right. They're dying and it's a disaster.

9. JOSHUA: What do you mean they're dying?

10. DAN MACUMBA: We often call coral reefs the rainforests of the sea. About a quarter of all marine species live and breed in them... It's where you find so many species of fish, shrimp, lobster etc.

11. JOSHUA: My dad's a fisherman, but he usually fishes just beyond the reef.

12. DAN MACUMBA: That's because he wants to catch the bigger fish. But you know reefs are so important. Take our town for example. The reef out there acts as a natural buffer protecting us from the full brunt of any big storms, like the one we've just had.

13. ALEX: So why are they dying?

14. DAN MACUMBA: Coral reefs are highly sensitive to changes in water temperature, clarity and acidity. They act as early indicators of climate change.

15. JOSHUA: So the coral is dying because of climate change?

16. DAN MACUMBA: Yes. The climate change heats up the sea temperature at the surface. And the more carbon dioxide gets into the air and is being absorbed by the oceans, the more acidic the sea water will become. Both these – the higher water temperatures and the acidification – have led to mass bleaching of the coral. This means the coral loses its colour, like over there. Bleached corals are weaker and more prone to disease.

17. ALEX: So, with climate change and global warming, the coral could be wiped out?

18. DAN MACUMBA: Look at this small piece I've just cut off to do tests on. It's white, brittle and dead. If the sea temperature goes up just one degree, coral bleaches. If it goes up two or three, corals may die.

- 19. JOSHUA:** So the water here is likely to have warmed up two or three degrees?
- 20. DAN MACUMBA:** I would say so, yes. And because the coral is dying, it's endangering all the species that live in the coral reefs.
- 21. JOSHUA:** All the little fish who hang out in the coral until they're bigger, won't have anywhere to go...
And I guess that would affect the fishermen as well.
- 22. DAN MACUMBA:** It's all interlinked: climate change, the warming of the seas - it's a bit depressing seeing this beautiful coral dying before our very eyes. Anyway, I must get back to my lab. Here's my card. If you ever want any more information, be sure to give me a call.
- 23. JOSHUA:** Thanks a lot. It was very good to talk to you.

25. ALEX: Isn't it strange? Two weeks ago I was so sceptical about global warming and climate change. But now, it seems everywhere I look, everything I do, something is somehow being affected by climate change.

26. JOSHUA: I know. It's kind of scary. But let's do something fun. Let's play football!

SFX: **KICKING FOOTBALL**

27. ALEX: Hey, get this one!

28. JOSHUA: **(shouting)** Mind that boat behind you.

29. ALEX: Too late. Oh my god, look, Josh, isn't this your dad's boat? There's a massive hole in its side.

- 30. JOSHUA:** **(running)** What? A hole? Where?
- 31. ALEX:** Here. It looks like someone's taken an axe to it.
- 32. JOSHUA:** I don't believe it. **(kicking boat)** Who the hell has done this?
- 33. ALEX:** Look. There's like some message nailed into the side. **(pulling off note and reading)** "Go back to school. Call off the demonstration. You'll lose more than a boat next time".
- 34. JOSHUA:** It has to be someone connected to the power plant. And they've somehow found out about next week's demonstration against the plant.
- 35. ALEX:** Oh no. What if my dad is somehow involved in all of this?

36. JOSHUA: I feel sick. How can I look my dad in the face now?

Scene Two: Hospital

SFX: **PHONE RINGING**

37. LORNA: (in a hushed voice) Hello?

38. VOICE OF ALEX: Lorna? Is that you? I can't hear you very well?

39. LORNA: Hi, Alex. I'm at the hospital. That's why I can't speak very loudly.

40. ALEX: Oh no. Ok, well, we'll speak later. We need to have a meeting. I'll tell you about it later.

41. LORNA: Ok, talk to you later. Bye.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING

42. DOCTOR: Right. We've just got the blood tests back for your aunt, and she's definitely got malaria. We're going to start treatment immediately.

43. LORNA: Oh, my god. Will she be ok? But that's weird, doctor, she lives up on the plateau. They don't normally get malaria there.

44. DOCTOR: She'll be fine. But it's lucky you got her here quickly. You know we're seeing more and more cases of malaria in people who've contracted it up in their hill towns.

45. LORNA: But why?

46. DOCTOR: All the research points to climate change. We are seeing much warmer weather, leading to higher temperatures at higher altitudes. Tropical diseases and their so-called vectors, like mosquitoes and flies, are following.

47. LORNA: We always thought when we went to stay with my aunt we couldn't get malaria or dengue fever.

48. DOCTOR: Well, it's not widespread like here on the coast. But it does seem to be getting worse, even in some of the higher altitude towns, due to climate change. Anyway, your aunt can probably leave tomorrow if her fever starts to go down.

51. LORNA: Thank you, Doctor.

Scene Three: Lorna's House

SFX ATMO: **TV IN BACKGROUND**

52. LORNA: Ok, so we're all here. Alex. What's been going on?

53. ALEX: Well, Josh and I were on the beach chatting to a marine biologist and then we found Josh's dad's boat, totally trashed. There was this note attached to it. **(pulls out note from pocket)**

54. CAROL: It's the same people.

55. LORNA: What same people?

- 56. CAROL:** Well, I didn't want to mention it. I thought it might scare us all into calling off our task force.
- 57. JOSHUA:** What happened, Carol?
- 58. CAROL:** My newspaper stand was set on fire two days ago. A huge guy just came out of nowhere, told me not to mess with "the big boys" and that we shouldn't interfere with the power plant.
- 59. JOSHUA:** It's got to be the same people who destroyed my dad's boat. I'm so angry!
- 60. CAROL:** Calm down. We've got to think rationally. From this note and from Carol's experience these guys want us to stop campaigning. They're scared we might be making progress.

61. ALEX: It's alright for you to talk like this, Lorna. But what if something happens to one of us or our families?

62. LORNA: Well, you'd be alright, Alex. Your dad's deeply involved in it. How do we know you're not leaking information to him? How did these people find out about next week's demonstration?

63. CAROL: Did you tell your dad, Alex?

64. ALEX: Of course I didn't. I know you don't believe me, but I don't want this power plant to go ahead either. And I'd never put your lives in jeopardy. You have to believe me.

65. JOSHUA: I believe you, Alex. Lorna, you can't go blaming Alex just because his dad is involved

in building the plant. We've got to stop arguing about this.

66. ALEX: Yeah, but I'm scared. I vote we call it all off.

67. JOSHUA: Well, I vote we keep going.

68. CAROL: Me too. That's two votes to one. Lorna, it's your call. It's all up to you!

END OF EPISODE 5

Outro:

And that's all from Learning by Ear for today. Join us next time when we find out if Lorna decides to pull the plug on the task force.

This series about climate change is written by Victoria Averill. Remember, if you'd like to hear this program again, please visit our website at:

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Goodbye for now and thanks for listening!