Learning by Ear
“Unce upon a time... in Africa”
Episode 5: “CHRISTIANIZATION”

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CHARACTERS:

Intro/Outro (female/male)

Scene 1:
- Mum (38, female)
- June (13, female)
- Dad (40, male)
- Grandpa (77, male)

Scene 2:
- Priest/Grandpa (77, male)
- Nobles (from 35 on, both genders)
- King John I/Dad (40, male)

Scene 3:
- June (13, female)
- Dad (40, male)
- Grandpa (77, male)
Scene 4:
- Young priest (32, male)
- Woman (30, female)
- Man (35, male)

Scene 5:
- June (13, female)
- Mum (38, female)
- Grandpa (77, male)
- Dad (40, male)

Intro:
Hello and welcome to another episode of “Once upon a time... in Africa”, the “Learning by Ear” series about African History! Today, June wants to find out from Grandpa Peter why she has to get up early every Sunday. Stay with us and find out how Christianity came to Africa a long, long time ago...

Music 1, then cross fade with SFX
**First Scene: Early in the morning at home.**

SFX: Kitchen (pots, fire). In the background: cock crowing, birds, then fade under

1. Mum: **(talking loudly)** June!! Get up, it’s time!

2. June: **(sleepy, from a distance)** No! I don’t want to…

3. Mum: **(talking loudly)** Come on! The priest won’t wait for you!

SFX: (fade in) Kitchen (pots, fire), footsteps approaching. In the background: birds, then fade under

4. June: **(sleepy, approaching)** I’m here now! Good morning, Mum! **(kisses her)** Good morning, Dad, hello, Grandpa!

5. Dad/Grandpa: Good morning!

6. Dad: It’s Sunday, June! Why don’t you go and get smartened up to go to church?
7. June: (sleepy) Why do we have to go to church every single Sunday? Who invented that? Grandpa, you certainly know, don’t you? (giggling)

8. Grandpa: Well, I don’t know who invented that. But I actually know who brought Christianity to sub-Saharan Africa…

9. June: (suddenly wide awake) Who, Grandpa?

10. Grandpa: The Portuguese!

11. June: Tell me, Grandpa! Tell me how it was while I get myself dressed, all right?

SFX: Footsteps going away, kitchen (pots, fire). In the background: birds, then fade under
12. Grandpa:  
(speaking loudly) It was the year of 1482, when a Portuguese navigator called Diogo Cão arrived at the estuary of the Zaire river. He was the first European to come to sub-Saharan Africa! In his first encounter with the people of Soyo – which today is a city in Angola – it became clear that he had arrived at a big empire: the Congo! The empire was made up of what now are the Republic of Congo, the Western part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the North of Angola.

13. June:  
(from a distance) Big empire, hein!

14. Grandpa:  
(speaking loudly) It really was! And as Diogo Cão didn’t have an interpreter to understand the local population, he decided to take with him four natives, when he returned to Portugal some months later. He intended to teach them some Portuguese and about European civilization...

15. June:  
(from a distance) Civilization? Why did they need to learn about civilization?
16. Grandpa: (speaking loudly) Because the arrogance of the Portuguese, just like that of the other European colonialists said that civilised people were only those people who had European manners and customs... and were Christian.

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

17. June: I'm ready. Does my new skirt suit me, Dad?

18. Dad: You look like a princess, darling!

19. Mum: We should get going if you're all ready!

20. Dad: Yes, let's go! (amused) The priest won't wait for us...

SFX: Footsteps from various people going away, door being locked, then footsteps from various people on gravel path. In the background: chicken, goats, birds, then fade under
21. June: (enthusiastic) Grandpa, go on with the story, it's still a way to go until we arrive at the church!

22. Grandpa: Diogo Cão returned to the empire of the Congo in 1485. And he brought the men he had taken with him and who were content with the way they had been treated in Portugal. (pause) But he also brought Catholic priests and soldiers. When they eventually came to meet the Manikongo, the King of the Congo, they were delighted. And this fascination was mutual! Both the Portuguese delegation with the natives and the Manikongo with the visitors. Now, listen to what happened some time later. Emily, imagine you are the Queen of the Congo, and you, Charles, you're the King. And me, well, I can be the Portuguese priest...

Flashback music
Second Scene: At the baptism of the King and Queen of the Congo.
SFX: Nobles murmuring. In the background: birds, then fade under

23. Priest:  Today, on this holy day, the third of March 1491, I, a modest priest sent by John II, the King of Portugal, baptize you, Nzinga a Nkuvu, Manikongo, King of the Congo and the neighboring empires, with the Christian faith! Take this salt, let it melt in your mouth and you'll receive Christ in you! In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.


25. Nobles:  (murmuring) What a beautiful ceremony! What a ritual! Wonderful! This must be civilization! I want it, too!

26. Priest:  You, Nzinga a Nkuvu, Manikongo, King of the Congo and the neighboring empires, will be named, from this day on, John, like the King of Portugal! And you, Queen of the Congo and the neighboring empires will be Leonor, like our beloved Queen! Take this salt, daughter, and let it melt in your mouth! Let’s make the sign of the cross. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

28. Priest: May the almighty God bless you!

SFX: Footsteps from various people going away on stone ground.
In the background: birds, then fade under

29. Nobleman: (speaking softly) Father, could you also baptize me and my family?

30. Priest: That's what I'm here for, my son! Every soul who desires to convert to the Christian faith is welcome in the house of God!

SFX: Footsteps from various people going away on stone ground.
In the background: birds, then fade under

31. King John I: (speaking loudly to everyone) And from you, my noblemen, I expect that everyone of you, without exception, join our new faith from now on!
32. Nobles: Absolutely, Manikongo, King of the Congo and the neighboring empires! Of course we will! Oh yes! I want it, too! Such a beautiful ritual...

Flashback music

Third Scene: On the way to the church.

SFX: Footsteps from various people going on gravel path. In the background: chicken, goats, sheep, cows, birds, then fade under

33. June: What? Did they convert just like that, all of them?

34. Dad: Politics...

35. Grandpa: Indeed! It had much to do with politics! The King got baptized, the nobles, too, and then the people wanted to imitate the most important people of the nation. Everyone “kudia mungwa”, wanted to eat the salt! That meant that they wanted to get baptised because of the salt that was given during baptism.
36. June: And how did the people in small villages react to that change? That can’t have been an easy task...

37. Grandpa: Now that’s when you appear in the story, June! If you lived at that time in a village of the Congo Empire, you would probably meet a Christian missionary, sent by the Portuguese King. He sent many – to bring God’s word to African lands. The first ones went to the Empire of the Congo. Later, during colonisation, all European empires sent missionaries to Africa. But, like you said, in the villages, the task was more difficult...

Flashback music

Fourth Scene: In a village of the Congo Empire.

SFX: Wooden door being slammed. In the background: birds, then fade under
38. Priest: *(murmuring, desperate)* How come no soul in this village wants to get educated? These people don’t understand anything about civilization... I’ve come to the end of the world to bring them education, God’s faith, and all they do is slam the door! *(pause, then speaking loudly)* Oh, mam! Ma-am!

SFX: Footsteps running on gravel path. In the background: birds, then fade under

39. Priest: *(breathless)* Do you wish to have your children educated, Mam? Send them to my school! I will teach them to read and write!

40. Woman: You go preach to another village!

SFX: Footsteps from two people on gravel path. In the background: birds, then fade under

41. Priest: *(breathless while he goes)* It will be good for them to go to school, Mam!
42. Woman: (angry) You let me alone! My children get enough education at home! Nobody needs to read or write in this village!

43. Priest: (talking loudly) Wait Mam, don’t go away!

SFX: Fast footsteps from one person going away on gravel path and other person approaching. In the background: birds, then fade under

44. Man: (from a distance) Hey, Mr! Mr. Priest! Wait!

45. Priest: (hopeful) Yes? Can I help you, Son?

SFX: Footsteps from one person running on gravel path, approaching. In the background: birds, then fade under

46. Man: (breathless) I’ve heard you’re looking for people for your school! It’s not that I trust that education thing much... But I have a daughter who never helps my wife at home. Perhaps it will help if she goes to school... Otherwise I won’t get her married off!
47. Priest: Thanks be to God! Send her to me tomorrow by sunrise!

Flashback music

Fifth Scene: On the way to church.

SFX: Footsteps from various people on gravel path. In the background: chicken, goats, sheep, cows, birds, then fade under

48. June: What did you mean with me appearing in the story, Grandpa? I’m not that daughter who never helps her mum, am I?

49. Mum: (laughing) How well your Grandpa knows you, my daughter...

50. Grandpa: It was actually a joke, well, more or less... just to show how difficult it was for the missionaries to convince people to go to the schools they had built. Of course, to understand the Bible people had to learn to read.
51. June: But weren’t the missionaries in Africa supposed to bring education and lessons about the Bible?

52. Grandpa: They came with that purpose, yes, many of them. But others started helping their kings to achieve their goals. There is even a saying: “When the white men arrived, they had the Bible in their hands and we had the land. Now we have the Bible and they the land”. Have you heard it?

53. June: (meditative) Hmmm… No.

54. Dad: But that explains what you mean, Father...

55. June: Does it mean the Europeans wanted land?

56. Grandpa: Exactly! But before wanting land they actually wanted something else: slaves. Of course, there were also missionaries who were against the exploitation of the Africans. But unfortunately they couldn’t or didn’t stop slavery from advancing throughout the continent.

People arriving at the church and talking
SFX: Church bells. In the background: birds, then fade out

**Outro:**
And this is the end of the fifth episode of “Once upon a time… in Africa”, the “Learning by Ear” series about African History!

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Good-bye until next time!