

## **Learning by Ear – Religious Dialogue: “A Bridge over Gori”**

### **Episode 01: “Back to Ubuntu College”**

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#### **List of characters for episode 1:**

- Narrator /Philip, male (17)
- Harry, male (17)
- Mat, male (16)
- Layla, female (16)
- Roshi, female (16)
- Ishmail Omer, Layla’s father (43)
- Hassan, Layla’s brother (12)
- + Students (background noise outside/singing in hall)
- + Girls in the background (at Café)

**1. SIG TUNE UP**

**2. INTRO:**

Welcome to Learning by Ear and Episode 1 of our new 10 part radio drama series "A Bridge Over Gori", which tells the dramatic story of how religion and politics drive a wedge between two communities, two families ...and two young people who are forced to hide their love for each other.

Join our heroes as they discover the importance of dialogue, collaboration and tolerance, and try to resolve a conflict which seems to be set in stone.

In today's episode we meet Harry, Layla and their friends. They are second year students returning to Ubuntu College after the summer break. Harry is living with his uncle, a Catholic priest, and he is finding it a little difficult. Layla is shocked by her younger brother's new behaviour. Their family life drastically changed a few months ago and she must now help to bring him up. Philip is one of Harry's best friends. He tells you the whole story.

But let him start at the beginning. Listen up and find out in our first episode, "Back To Ubuntu College"!

## **Scene 1**

### **Harry, Philip, Mat, students in background**

**3. PHILIP/NARRATOR:** Gori is a flourishing market town divided by a river. We grow maize and fruit. Many hundreds of years ago the good farming attracted immigrants from all parts of Africa. As a result we have people of different colour, cultures, languages and religions. Ten years ago an enlightened leader from Gori, Chief Solomon Banda, had a vision of setting up a truly integrated society of Africans, for Africans and established Ubuntu College, a progressive interfaith place of learning for 16 to 18 year olds – girls and boys. I joined the college two years ago. I still remember those days as if it were yesterday! How excited we were, seeing everyone again after the long summer break!

**4. SFX Early morning. Learners assemble in school grounds, student's noise, birds**

**5. HARRY:** Hi Philip. How are you?

**6. PHILIP:** Good, Harry. And you?

**7. HARRY:** Great...although it's not always easy to live with an uncle who's a Catholic priest!

8. **PHILIP:** I sympathise, man! And your school report?
9. **HARRY:** Not like yours – all straight 'A's, I bet!
10. **PHILIP:** Yes! My dad was pleased, for a change! My mother didn't seem bothered. And you?
11. **HARRY:** Four grade ones and three grade twos. My parents and relatives back in my village were happy to hear the news, but you know my uncle! He's never satisfied! He will always find something to complain about! **(CHANGES VOICE TO SOUND OLDER)** Harry, that Philip will walk off with the Head Boy badge if you are not careful!
12. **PHILIP:** Me? Hah! I'm not good looking enough to be Head Boy!
13. **HARRY:** **(Laughing)** You? You turn all the girls' heads! That's why I hang around you!
14. **PHILIP:** **(Laughs)** Yeah right!
15. **HARRY:** We're going to go on having fun together! And YOU are going to introduce me to your world of city lights and pretty girls! Right?
16. **PHILIP:** **(laughing)** Same old Harry! Give me five!
17. **SFX: Smack palms of hands and click flingers**
18. **MAT:** **(Off mic)** Philip, my leader! Harry!! **(deep voice)** Take us into the field! Let us fight!

19. **PHILIP:** **(laughing)** Mat! – my right hand man! Comrade in arms!

20. **MAT:** Now what am I? Your right hand? Or your arms?  
Make up your mind! **(They all laugh)**

21. **SFX: BELL RINGS**

22. **PHILIP:** Hah! The sound of learning! Hey guys! It's good to be back after that long summer break.

23. **HARRY:** Are we the greatest trio in Ubuntu college, or what?

24. **PHILIP+ MAT:** We are! Long live the Ubuntu Chiefs!

**AMBIENCE FADE OUT/CHANGE OF VOICE**

25. **PHILIP/NARRATOR:** And we were indeed: and what a force in our school soccer team- Harry, Mat and myself – the Ubuntu Chiefs! Meanwhile, on the other side of the school ground, there was Layla – a girl I had spent hours gazing at in class- beautiful, with eyes like dark pools. I watched her greeting her buddies.

**Scene 2. Outside /same college garden**

**Layla, Roshi, students in background**

**26. SFX: student's noise, birds**

**27. LAYLA:** Roshi! You look great! Did you have a good holiday?

**28. ROSHI:** Yeah- we had nice picnics and family gatherings. It was fun!

**29. LAYLA:** Oohhh! Any nice boys in the family?

**30. ROSHI:** Layla! I wish! All the boys who are my age look so young! And you?

**31. LAYLA:** My brother was a pain, as usual, and my father didn't let me do much except read and help around the house! He thinks I should stay out of the sun, so that I stay fair-skinned!

**32. ROSHI:** Ai! These old fashioned ideas. Hasn't he heard that "Black is beautiful?" **(laughs)** And what about your running? I hope you kept it up.

**33. LAYLA:** I did – in my room! It was too hot to run outdoors, all covered up from head to toe!

**34. ROSHI:** Layla! We must find out how other Muslim girls train. You are not the first. We need you fit and ready to win more gold cups for our house team!

**35. LAYLA:** **(laughs)** Hah! So you only want me for my body!

- 36. ROSHI:** Ubuntu College is all about boys AND girls taking part in team work and sports. Just tell your father, it's part of the school curriculum. It's what your mother would have wanted.
- 37. LAYLA:** **(sadly)** Yes, you're right. Pity she's not here to insist that my brother Hassan comes here one day – it would knock that militant nonsense out of his head.
- 38. BELL RINGS**
- 39. ROSHI:** Cheer up! There's the bell. Time for morning assembly.

### **Scene 3. In the Big Hall**

**Philip, students singing**

**40. Song: Ubuntu Anthem (song see extra document)**

**41. PHILIP/NARRATOR: (SPEAKING OVER ANTHEM)** And as our college anthem flowed, so too did the river outside. Its muddy waters divided the town and separated two very influential families: Harry's family, the Dembeles, and Layla's family – the Omers. Harry's father, Chief Bandile Dembele was a traditional ruler, out in the rural areas. There was no decent school there, so two years ago he decided to ask his brother, the powerful Father Barnabus, to take Harry in and give him a good schooling at the progressive Ubuntu College. Harry called him Bishop Uncle for fun. But through his friendship to Mat and myself, Harry was discovering a taste for the city and that there was more to life than just being a good learner and a good Catholic... if only Mat would let him!

**Scene 4. In a cafe with music and pool tables**

**Harry, Mat, Philip, girls in background**

**42. SFX: Disco music/pool tables**

**43. MAT:** We must go! Come on, guys!

**44. HARRY:** **(protesting)** No, Mat man - Suzie and I were just having fun. Give us another 30 minutes.

**45. PHILIP:** **(laughing)** Rachel and I need more time too!

**46. Girl giggles**

**47. MAT:** **(joking)** Look at you both! A future priest! And you Philip, the son of a leading newspaper editor! What would your parents say if they could see you now!

**48. SFX: Pool playing**

**49. HARRY:** We're only playing pool! Anyway, they would wish they hadn't missed out! **(laughing)**

**50. MAT:** **(more serious)** Look! I have the car. If you don't come now, you walk!

**51. Philip + Harry complaining and saying goodbye to the girls.**

**CUT AMBIENCE/CHANGE OF VOICE**

- 52. PHILIP/NARRATOR:** Meanwhile, on the other riverside, the Omers were having dinner. Layla's father had lost his wife to cancer a while back and was bringing Layla and her younger brother Hassan up alone. He was a well established businessman and sat on the local council. He complained that Father Barnabus was becoming too influential in Gori. Their business interests were starting to clash and Hassan was picking up radical talk from the older boys at the madrassa – the Islamic school at the mosque that he was attending – something that Layla found very disturbing.

### Scene 5. At home

Mr. Omer, Layla, Hassan

**53. SFX: Supper/utensils, dishes**

- 54. MR OMER:** **(talking while munching)** You know Layla, that Father Barnabus – he's too influential. He's got his eye on the same piece of land as the Islamic Council. But we applied for it first.
- 55. LAYLA:** Why does he want it?
- 56. HASSAN:** What reasons does a Christian need? He is against Islam.

57. **LAYLA:** Hassan, we don't need that kind of talk! Anyway, what do you know about Christianity and Islam. You're just 12.
58. **HASSAN:** You go to that silly Ubuntu College where they teach you that there is no **one** religion that has all the answers. But there is! I go to the madrassa. I KNOW!
59. **LAYLA:** Then you should know Muslims and Christians share a common belief in God - in **one** God. We, the Muslims, also recognise Jesus as a great prophet and Mary his mother as a great woman of God.
60. **HASSAN:** There is only Allah. **(shouts)** Allah be praised!
61. **SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS**
62. **MR. OMER:** Shhhh! Be quiet Hassan please!
63. **SFX: PICKS UP CELL. RING STOPS**
64. **MR. OMER:** Ishmail Omer speaking....yes....yes....Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup>. Good...yes... **(FADE)** I need the figures from the last meeting – oh and make sure you let Mr Layton Browne know – the editor in chief. We need the *Gori Tribune* to cover this.

**AMBIENCE FADE OUT/CHANGE OF VOICE**

**65. PHILIP/NARRATOR:** Mr Omer was far too busy running his business to see his son's radicalism, or to do anything about it. But Layla could see it – and she could feel trouble brewing ahead.

**66. SIG TUNE UP**

**67. OUTRO:**

And that's all from *Learning by Ear* for today! A new school year has started for Harry, Layla, Philip and their friends. They are all excited but do not yet know what awaits them... Please join us for Episode 2 and discover how Philip deals with his first big shock.

You have been listening to "A Bridge Over Gori", a story written by Romie Singh.

And remember, if you want to hear the programme again or tell friends about it, please visit our website at [www dot d w – world dot d e slash lbe](http://www.world.de/lbe).

Goodbye for now!

**END OF EPISODE 1**