

Learning by Ear 2010

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

Episode: 01 The Adventures of Mbott the Toad

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## **LEARNING BY EAR 2010**

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

## **EPISODE 01: „THE ADVENTURES OF MBOTT THE TOAD“**

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### **CHARACTERS:**

1. NARRATOR (male, about 40 years old)
2. MBOTT THE TOAD (male, about 20 years old)
3. SINDAKH THE GECKO (female, about 20 years old)
4. KAKATAR THE CHAMELEON (male, about 30 years old)

## **INTRO/ PRESENTER:**

When was the last time you listened to a fairy-tale? Last night? Weeks ago? Or was it even years ago? Today we welcome you to our new Learning by Ear series called 'Shall I tell you something? African fables for a culture of peace'.

Fables conceal universal truths and from time to time they can even open the eyes of the ignorant. As you might know, when people coexist peacefully, they have a huge potential for development. So the fables we have chosen for you deal with conflict and reconciliation. How should you handle a tricky situation? How can you deal with distrust, envy or selfishness? In every story you will find a grain of truth that might help you now or later in your personal life.

So, stay tuned and listen carefully to find out why the toad lives in such an unpleasant environment.

„The adventures of Mbott the Toad” – a story about friendship, trust and betrayal.

### **1. MUSIC (play as background for the entire script)**

### **2. NARRATOR:**

A long, long time ago, Mbott the Toad made friends with Sindakh the Gecko. They liked and trusted each other completely. One day, when it was scorching hot and a strong wind was blowing, the toad paid an unexpected visit on his friend. Sindakh the Gecko was resting in the shade of a baobab tree.

**3. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

“Salam, my sister! Are you at peace?”

**4. NARRATOR:**

asked the toad politely.

**5. SINDAKH THE GECKO**

“Yes, my brother. If it was not for the suffocating heat and my empty stomach.”

**6. NARRATOR:**

answered the gecko, who was visibly exhausted.

**7. MBOTT THE TOAD**

“Well, why don't you come with me? I feel like eating some nice juicy mangoes.”

**8. NARRATOR:**

The gecko did not have to be asked twice, due to the state she was in. And off they went together.

**9. SFX: Sounds of gecko and toad in the grass**

**10. NARRATOR:**

Along the way, they told each other jokes and laughed heartily, when suddenly the toad caught sight of a field of mango trees whose ripe fruit beckoned invitingly.

**11. SINDAKH THE GECKO:**

“Oh my! My brother, today we are going to have a feast. Just the sight of those mangoes makes me drool. Listen, let’s act quickly before the owner turns up. I’ll climb the tree and pick some fruit and you keep watch. If we are in danger, give me a croak.”

**12. NARRATOR:**

No sooner said than done. The gecko shot up the tree and began to savour the mangoes one after the other, completely forgetting about her companion.

**13. SINDAKH THE GECKO (eating noisily):**

“Hmm...Hmmm”

**14. NARRATOR:**

she kept saying, rolling her eyes back and forth. One of the discarded cores almost knocked the toad out, and this made him lose his patience.

**15. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

“Hey, what about me, my sister? You are certainly picking them, but I am the one who saw them. So, please throw me down my share!”

**16. NARRATOR:**

Mbott went on and on so much he made the gecko angry.

**17. SINDAKH THE GECKO:**

“Listen, stop acting like a beggar! Your moaning is getting on my nerves! Must I remind you that one should not talk with a full mouth? You do not deserve my company.”

**18. NARRATOR:**

The gecko turned away and got on with her feast.

**19. SINDAKH THE GECKO: eating noisily**

**20. NARRATOR:**

Confronted with such an indifferent and selfish attitude, the toad understood at once that it was no use arguing.

**21. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

“I thank you, my sister. Now I understand why my wise grandfather often said, “Trust does not really exist, otherwise why can water, where the fish live, be used to cook them?”

**22. NARRATOR:**

The toad then had a bright idea. He lit a big wood fire under the mango tree. Thick smoke rose up to the gecko who eventually began to choke.

**23. SINDAKH THE GECKO:**

“Say, you down there? Aren't you warm enough? Are you grilling mango or something? Stop your nonsense!”

**24. NARRATOR:**

The toad ignored her. As for the gecko, she was coughing so hard now she was likely to vomit her guts up as well as all the mangoes she had just gulped down.

**25. SINDAKH THE GECKO: coughing fit**

**26. NARRATOR:**

After a long time, the toad eventually answered:

**27. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

"I'm sorry, my good friend and sister, I was so cold I could feel my blood freezing. And when I'm cold I lose my voice. That is my only problem."

**28. NARRATOR:**

Then, without another word, the toad fanned the fire until the gecko ended up tumbling into the live embers. Well, she escaped with her life, but not without a few burns from which she still has the famous black flecks on her body.

**29. SFX: Free fall of the gecko**

### **30. NARRATOR:**

Afterwards the gecko went and told the village that the clumsy toad, jealous of her ability to climb trees, had not found anything better to do than to throw glowing embers at her while she was having a nap.

A toad hunt was therefore announced in order to teach him a lesson. The indignant animals set out on their quest for the culprit.

Mbott sought refuge in the home of Kakatar, the chameleon. Kakatar is a great marabou, respected by all. After telling his story, Mbott the Toad pleaded:

### **31. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

"I beg you, Kakatar, please help me! I am so small! I do not know how to protect myself!

### **32. NARRATOR:**

Kakatar had pity on him, produced a magic potion and spoke:

### **33. KAKATAR THE CHAMELEON:**

"This beverage will give you phenomenal strength. You may drink it but only on one condition: you must never misuse the power it will give you!"

### **34. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

"I solemnly promise. You can trust me completely."

**35. NARRATOR:**

...assured the toad. And without further ado, he eagerly drank the concoction and took leave of the chameleon.

**36. MBOTT THE TOAD: drinks noisily**

**37. NARRATOR:**

Boasting invincibility, the toad soon wanted to dominate all the other animals. He gathered them all together, except for Kakatar, and announced:

**38. MBOTT THE TOAD:**

"Henceforth, I will rule you all! And I challenge any opponents to a fight!"

**39. NARRATOR:**

The gathering did not take him seriously, especially the gecko who snorted with laughter. In one leap, Mbott attacked her and almost choked her to death to the great astonishment of the other animals.

Leuk the Mischievous Hare then tried his luck, but ended up flying through the air, landing in a neighbouring field. Even the hippopotamus and the lion had to admit defeat against the toad. The old elephant lost his composure and charged Mbott making a terrible trumpeting noise. They all held their breath.

The toad leapt into the giant animal's ear and began croaking so loudly that the elephant thought he was going crazy. He tried to get rid of the intruder sitting in his ear with the help of his long trunk but without success. He then began to spin wildly around in circles.

#### **40. ELEPHANT: Trumpeting and trampling**

#### **41. NARRATOR:**

His trampling shook the ground to such an extent that it made Kakatar fall from his tree a good distance away. The chameleon therefore set off to discover the cause of this worrying phenomenon. What a surprise for him to see all the animals gathered together and the raging elephant in their midst. Having listened to what the witnesses had to say, Kakatar shook with rage:

#### **42. KAKATAR THE CHAMELEON:**

"Mbott! You did not keep your promise! To punish you, you will lose all your powers and you must spend the rest of your life in one of the most uncomfortable places in the world!"

#### **43. NARRATOR:**

Without further ado, the chameleon captured the toad with his long tongue and sent him flying through the air...

#### **44. SFX: "SPLASH" (Sound of an object falling in a puddle of mud)**

#### **45. NARRATOR:**

Mbott landed in the mud at the bottom of a pond, where he still lives humbly today ...

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

#### **46. Music**

#### **OUTRO/ PRESENTER:**

And so ends our fable "The Adventures of Mbott the Toad". It was written by the Senegalese storyteller, Ibrahima Ndiaye, also called Ibo. He told us in confidence, and we believe him, that his grandmother originally told him many of the stories you will hear in this Learning by Ear series.

What do you think about the tale? Did you ever experience a situation where you felt really powerful? Please tell us! We want to know! Send an email to [lbe@dw-world.de](mailto:lbe@dw-world.de) or leave us your comments on our website at: [www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe). There you can also subscribe to our podcasts and listen to this episode or any other Learning by Ear series again.

Thanks for being with us and don't forget to tune in next time!

See you again soon!

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