

**LEARNING BY EAR 2012**

**"I am still human - A story of Africa's mentally ill"**

**EPISODE 5: "Journey to recovery"**

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**List of characters by scene:**

**SCENE ONE: MALEMBA SEEKS HELP FROM MIZANJA**

- Malemba (f, 35)
- Mizanja (m, 65)
- Narrator

**SCENE TWO: PASTOR AND KAPAKA'S FAMILY AT HOME WITH  
NEW BORN BABY**

- Kapaka (m, 25)
- Cheupe (f, 25)
- Pastor (m, 40)
- Baby (not an actor)
- Narrator

**SCENE THREE: IRENE FINDS VALERIE IN THE STREETS**

- Irene (f,19)
- Dora (f, 18)

**INTRO:**

Hello and thanks for joining us here at Learning by Ear for the fifth episode of our series on mental illness in Africa entitled “**I am still human**”. In the previous episode, Malemba's hut was burned down by villagers, who accused her of being a witch because of her mentally ill son Chumba. And Kapaka, who wanted to commit suicide, was rescued at the last minute by his pregnant wife Cheupe and his pastor who had come by to pray for him. Later Cheupe went into labour and was rushed to hospital. In the city, Valerie's condition has changed for the worse. She is now living in the streets where she experienced physical abuse and was stigmatised by a guard at a shop. Stay with us to see where the story takes us next in this episode titled “**Journey to recovery**”. We start in the village, where Malemba, now homeless, has gone to seek help and counselling from the only person she can trust: Mizanja, the traditional healer.

**SCENE ONE: MALEMBA SEEKS HELP FROM MIZANJA**

1. **ATMO:**                    **AFRICAN JUNGLE AMBIENCE**
  
2. **MIZANJA:**                Malemba, I am deeply sorry for what happened to you.
  
3. **MALEMBA:**              I lost everything, but I am still glad Chumba was not in the house. I would have lost him in the fire.
  
4. **MIZANJA:**                The fathers were watching over him.

5. **MALEMBA:** Mizanja... I have only one request today. Since I lost all I had in the fire, there is nothing else left for me to do here. I plan to go to the city. I have a brother there who works and can help me with Chumba until I rebuild my house.
6. **MIZANJA:** And now you need me to lend you some money for the fare.
7. **MALEMBA:** **(impressed)** You are truly a gifted healer. How did you even know that? You can tell what my problems are before I even express them!
8. **MIZANJA:** Well, you don't need magic to figure that out. Your house was burned down, you don't have any money, and you have to travel hundreds of kilometres to the city. You are not going to walk there by foot, are you?
9. **MALEMBA:** **(laughs)** No, that would be impossible. While we are there, I will also take Chumba to the doctor. What do you think of that?
10. **MIZANJA:** I think you should do whatever it takes to help your son. He is a special boy, and it's a pity that I couldn't help him. Maybe they will find the answer. As for your house, I know those who were responsible for burning it down.

- 11. MALEMBA:**      **(surprised)** What? You mean my hut was set on fire deliberately? Why? I don't have any problems with anyone!
- 12. MIZANJA:**      Yes, but they hold a grudge against you, Malemba. Some of them came to me earlier and I warned them not to do it. They suspect you of being a witch.
- 13. MALEMBA:**      **(still shocked)** Me, a witch? That is unbelievable! Oh my God. So they wanted to kill me by burning my house down. They thought I was inside.
- 14. MIZANJA:**      Yes. But once again, the fathers were watching over you. That's why I like the idea of you moving away for some time. I will deal with this issue here.
- 15. MALEMBA:**      **(starts to cry)** I have not done any harm to any one, why would some people want me dead? Why? I only concern myself with my son Chumba.
- 16. MIZANJA:**      Actually, some of them believe you have bewitched your own son with evil spirits. They accuse you of many things. But it's not important, I know what kind of person you are and I have no doubt whatsoever about your innocence. It is clear that our forefathers warned you in advance and you left the house early to go fetch firewood.

**17. MALEMBA:** (still crying) No...I can't believe this. How can people be so cruel?

**18. MIZANJA:** It's a cruel world we are living in, my daughter. Anyway, I suggest you take this money and embark on your journey.

*KW begin*

**19. SFX:** COINS JINGLING WHEN COUNTED

**20. MALEMBA:** Mizanja, these are too many coins. Don't you have some notes?

**21. MIZANJA:** I don't accept notes, my child.

**22. MALEMBA:** Oh, I had no idea. Are your forefathers against bank notes?

**23. MIZANJA:** No! But there are too many fake notes nowadays. With coins it's hard to forge. Go now, and may the spirits of our ancestors guide you. I wish you well.

*KW end*

**24. NARRATOR:** Africa's way of looking at life is greatly influenced by culture and tradition. And it is true that traditional healers still play an important role, especially in the villages, where very often there is little or no access to hospital services. Mizanja, the elderly traditional healer, also helps Malemba with the bus fare and with his support. She quickly goes back home, packs whatever else is left and takes Chumba with her to the city. But what awaits them there? We will soon find out. Now though let's turn our attention to Kapaka whose wife Cheupe has just safely delivered a baby girl. The new parents are home with the pastor, but he is still concerned by Kapaka's suicide attempt. Let's catch up with their joy and confusion.

**SCENE TWO: PASTOR AND KAPAKA'S FAMILY AT HOME WITH  
NEW BORN BABY**

**25. SFX:** NEW BORN BABY CRYING

**26. CHEUPE:** (faintly) Kapaka, can you please give me the baby, I think she needs to drink.

**27. PASTOR:** Kapaka, did you hear what your wife just said?

**28. SFX:** BABY KEEPS CRYING MORE AND MORE

**29. KAPAKA:** (screaming) Shut up! Ahh, I can't take this noise anymore, it's driving me crazy. Everybody just shut up.

**30. SFX:** **BABY CRYING GETS LOUDER**

**31. PASTOR:** (calms baby) Sssshhhh...it's okay. Your Daddy is a bit stressed. But he didn't mean to scare you. Come here, little angel. Oh, that's good.

**32. SFX:** **BABY CALMS DOWN**

**33. CHEUPE:** Thank you, pastor. Please talk to Kapaka. I can't take this anymore. I don't know what to do... He hasn't even suggested a name for our baby!

**34. PASTOR:** Kapaka, do you mind coming with me outside for a little chat? This won't take very long.

**35. KAPAKA:** What is it you want from me pastor? I can't give you any offering, I lost my job. I can't sing in the choir any more, I lost my voice. I can't pray, I lost my faith. So what is it?

**36. PASTOR:** Please, let's give Cheupe and your daughter some space. I don't expect anything from you. I am only asking you to take a walk with me. Can you do that?

**37. KAPAKA:** (surprised) A walk? You mean like strolling?

*KW begin*

**38. PASTOR:** Exactly. Let's take a stroll. Don't bother showering or changing for now. Let's just go outside and get some fresh air, it will do us good after that difficult experience at the hospital with Cheupe.

*KW end*

**39. KAPAKA:** Hmm. Okay, let's go, but I can't go too far.

**40. PASTOR:** That's fine, we will go as far as you like.

**41. NARRATOR:** Without even realising it, Kapaka has taken the first step in his journey to recovery. The pastor has started the process of healing Kapaka. Remember, Kapaka had for days shown no interest in anything. He had reached a point where he was very close to committing suicide.

As the two men step out into the fresh air, in another part of the country, Irene continues her search for her friend Valerie. She has not seen her for days and has been searching for her everywhere. She even reported her missing to the police. But so far no one seems to recognize the picture of Valerie she is showing around. Right now, Irene is leaving a disco in town, where she went to dance and to forget about her worries for a few hours at least. With her is her colleague Dora.



**SCENE THREE: IRENE FINDS VALERIE IN THE STREETS**

**42. SFX:**                   **WEEKEND STREET AMBIENCE AT NIGHT**

**43. DORA:**               Irene, you are such a good dancer, I had no idea.

**44. IRENE:**             Ah come on, Dora, we all are, and it was so much fun.  
I just wish Valerie was here, too. I miss her and still  
feel guilty that I didn't help her enough.

**45. DORA:**             Stop blaming yourself. You can't stop someone from  
going insane! This was going to happen, either way. So  
forget about it and live your life.

**46. IRENE:**             That's the problem, I can't forget it. Valerie is a nice  
person. I know her, she was also the brightest nursing  
student. Don't you see how big a loss this is?

**47. DORA:**             No! As a matter of fact, I never liked her. Yes, it's sad  
that she is now completely mad, but so what? There are  
hundreds of thousands of mad people like her and no  
one cares.

**48. IRENE:**             But why, Dora? Why aren't we doing something to  
help these mentally ill people? You and I know that  
some of them only need the right treatment and care  
and they can completely recover.

**49. DORA:** Why? Irene, don't be naïve. You know very well that we have bigger health challenges than mental illness. People die everyday of malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Mothers die while giving birth, babies die during delivery and the list goes on and on. Do you want the medical system to switch from those important issues and focus on treating crazy people instead? Who by the way caused most of their illnesses themselves?

**50. IRENE:** I agree with you, Dora, that we do have some serious health challenges. But you know what? Mental illness should be one of them, too. I have been doing a little research and found out that one out of four people will develop some kind of mental illness in their lives. This is according to the World Health Organization. But guess what? Worldwide, only three percent of health spending is set aside to treat mental illnesses. But in reality, mental disorders cost the healthcare system about 13 percent of their total budgets.

**51. DORA:** **(impressed)** Wow! Okay I wasn't aware of that fact. One out of four people... that's a lot! Hey, talking of mentally ill people: Look at that mad lady seated in front of that shop. She must be one out of the four.

**52. IRENE:** Which lady? Where?

**53. DORA:** That one over there, with no clothes on. She must be cold!

**54. IRENE:** **(shocked)** Oh my God! This can't be true. Oh no. That's Valerie!

**OUTRO:**

That shocking scene brings us to the end of our fifth episode. What will happen next after Irene sees Valerie in that sad, humiliating and difficult situation? What will come out of Kapaka's walk with the pastor? And what awaits Malemba and her son as they arrive in the city? This and more in the coming episode of our story about mental illness called **"I am still human"**. To listen to this episode again, please visit our website at [dw.de/lbe](http://dw.de/lbe). You can also follow us on Facebook and share your comments there. Until then, take care and goodbye.