

LEARNING BY EAR 2012

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

EPISODE 6: "Gains here, pains there"

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List of characters by scene:

SCENE ONE: DORA AND IRENE TAKE VALERIE HOME

- Irene (f, 19)
- Valerie (f, 19)
- Dora (f, 18)
- Conductor (m, 30)
- Narrator

SCENE TWO: MALEMBA ARRIVES IN THE CITY AT KALAMA'S HOUSE

- Malemba (f, 35)
- Kalama (m, 40)
- Narrator

SCENE THREE: KAPAKA AND PASTOR RETURN HOME AFTER WALK

- Pastor (m, 40)
- Kapaka (m, 25)
- Cheupe (f, 25)

INTRO:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear. We are at the sixth episode of our ongoing radio drama on mental illness in Africa. The story is called “**I am still human**”. In the last episode, Malemba asked the traditional healer Mizanja to lend her some bus fare so that she could take her son Chumba to the city. Her neighbours had just burned down her house, because they suspected that she was a witch. Elsewhere, Kapaka finally agreed to go for a walk with his pastor, after his daughter was born. And while going home from an evening out with her colleague Dora, nursing student Irene found her missing friend Valerie: sitting in the streets with absolutely no clothes on. So where do we go from here? Stay tuned to today's episode entitled, “**Gains here, pains there**”. And we pick up the story right where we left off, with Irene and Dora startled by the sight of Valerie in the middle of the night.

SCENE ONE: DORA AND IRENE TAKE VALERIE HOME

1. ATMO: **NIGHT LIFE AMBIENCE IN THE STREETS**

2. IRENE: **(utterly shocked)** I can't believe my eyes! That is actually Valerie, what happened to her? How come she is naked, dirty, and cold in these dangerous streets?
Dora, we need to help her.

KW begin

3. DORA: Help her!?! Are you also out of your mind? Irene, your friend is mad, you can't help her... If that was the case then all those crazy people we see everyday would not be in the streets. Come let's go. Leave her alone, it's too late now.

4. **IRENE:** No, I can't! Valerie shouldn't be out here in the cold, she shouldn't be. Not like this. I mean all those thugs and mean people could take advantage of her and...

KW end

5. **DORA:** Yes, I know, Irene... she could be raped but that's what street life is like. It's just the way things are. Come on, we have to get some sleep. Remember, tomorrow we have classes.

6. **IRENE:** You go ahead... I will see what I can do. First I need you to help me with that scarf of yours, we have to cover her up somehow.

7. **DORA:** Forget it! My scarf is not covering any crazy lady. It was a special gift. Sorry, but no can do.

8. **IRENE:** Dora, I thought as nursing students we are supposed to put the patient first. Valerie needs our help.

9. **DORA:** Valerie needs *your* help! I am off... See you tomorrow at college.

10. **SFX:** **HIGH HEELS TIP TOE INTO DISTANCE**

11. **VALERIE:** **(shivering from cold)**

12. **IRENE:** **(softly)** Valerie. Do you remember me? I was your...

- 13. VALERIE:** Irene... I am cold. I feel so cold.
- 14. IRENE:** **(shocked)** You remember me? How can that be? What happened to your clothes, Val? Where have you been? Let's get you out of this place first.
- 15. VALERIE:** Irene... I am hungry... I am so hungry.
- 16. IRENE:** This is crazy! I mean you are talking like a normal person! But you are here... wear this coat, I know it's not enough but it will get us home.
- 17. NARRATOR:** Mental illnesses are complex and difficult to understand. Even mental experts find it hard to explain what causes some of them. And as we have seen with Valerie, being mentally ill does not necessarily mean losing one's memory, or totally losing one's sense of perception. Irene does her best to cover Valerie up with whatever clothing she can, and then she walks with her to the bus stop.
- 18. ATMO:** **AT THE BUS STOP (AT NIGHT)**
- 19. IRENE:** Valerie, come, let's get into this one. It's empty so we can sit at the back.
- 20. SFX:** **SLIDING DOOR OF A VAN OPENING**

21. ATMO: **ENGINE RUNS AS THEY ENTER THE BUS**

22. CONDUCTOR: (**arrogantly**) Eh, eh, you ! Where do you think you are going? Now get down, get down, we don't carry mad people.

23. IRENE: What? Are you serious? Did you just call us mad?
Please watch your mouth. And we have the right to travel in this van. My friend is sick and I want to take her home.

24. CONDUCTOR: Madam... I said we don't carry crazy passengers. Call the ambulance or take a taxi. Get out at once!

KW begin

25. IRENE: This is not fair. Let me talk to the driver!

26. CONDUCTOR: I'm the driver, the conductor and guess what? I am the owner, too. So don't waste your time or mine, get out and look for another means of transport.

27. IRENE: Okay, I will pay you extra for the entire back seats.
Let's go. My friend needs to eat and she's also cold.

28. CONDUCTOR: I am not interested in your money, don't you get it? I just want you out of my car! You see now: all the passengers are going to other vehicles because of you!
And now my van stinks, please get out.

KW end

29. SFX: **HOOTING AND HONKING**

30. IRENE: Sorry, Valerie, we have to get out.

31. VALERIE: **(suddenly scared)** They are coming for me! No...I don't want to go!!

32. IRENE: Val, please don't start now, I beg you. Just get out and we will find a way to get home. Okay?

33. VALERIE: **(begging)** Please don't take me away. Don't take my friend Irene away.

34. IRENE: Valerie, no one is taking you or me anywhere. I am right here with you. Now let's get out!

ENGINE SOUND fade out as they leave the van, BUS STOP ATMO gets louder again.

35. VALERIE: **(fearful)** I can't stay here, they will take me.

36. IRENE: **(screams, to conductor)** Please help me stop her! She wants to run away...Stop her!

37. CONDUCTOR: What? No way!

38. **SFX:** **FOOTSTEPS RUNNING AWAY INTO THE DISTANCE**
39. **IRENE:** **(shouting)** Valerie, come back! Valerie, wait!
40. **SFX:** **HIGH HEELS RUNNING INTO THE DISTANCE**
41. **CONDUCTOR:** This is not going to be a good day for business. No way. Two crazy ladies chasing each other, that can only mean bad luck.
42. **NARRATOR:** It is hard to imagine that mentally ill people are not treated like humans, but almost like animals. It is as if society is saying: They exist, but only in their own reality. Irene chases after Valerie who is running away from unseen people and voices that only she can hear. But because of her high heeled shoes, Irene can't keep up the pace. And so she stops breathless as Valerie disappears around the street corner with nothing on but Irene's coat.

The next day in the same city, Malemba has arrived with her son Chumba after a long tedious journey. Now she is standing in front of her older brother Kalama's door.

SCENE TWO: MALEMBA ARRIVES IN CITY AT KALAMA'S HOUSE

43. SFX: **KNOCKING ON DOOR**

44. KALAMA: Who is it?

45. MALEMBA: Kalama it's me, Malemba.

46. SFX: **DOOR BEING UNLOCKED**

47. KALAMA: Malemba! This is a nice surprise! What are you doing here? Oh Chumba... you have grown!

48. MALEMBA: May we come in? We have had a very tough trip.

49. KALAMA: Sure, come in. Please sit down, Chumba you can sit over here next to the wall. What can I get you?

50. MALEMBA: We are both hungry. So we will need something to eat. But first I have some news for you.

51. SFX: **SOMETHING BANGING AGAINST WALL**

52. KALAMA: **(shocked)** Oh my, Chumba! Stop banging your head on that wall. Malemba, can't you tell him to stop? The neighbours will complain.

53. MALEMBA: Oh, they will get used to it. We are planning on staying for a while, if that's okay.

KW begin

54. KALAMA: What? Stay for a while? Where?

55. MALEMBA: Here with you. Kalama, you are my only brother, where else could I go? Don't worry about Chumba. I will have to tie him up again... but not right now.

KW end

56. KALAMA: Uhhh... Malemba... I don't think that's a good idea. Besides, who will watch over your place in the village while you are here?

57. MALEMBA: I have no place. My hut was burned down. May we have something to drink?

58. KALAMA: **(shocked)** Burned down! Malemba, what are you talking about? Are you okay? Or are you also going...

59. MALEMBA: I am not going anywhere. We are here to stay until our place is rebuilt. Can we please have something to drink? Chumba hasn't eaten anything since we left.

60. KALAMA: What I meant to ask you was whether you too were going crazy. Anyway, here is some water.

- 61. SFX:** **WATER BEING POURED INTO A GLASS**
- 62. MALEMBA:** The neighbours burned down my hut. They believe I am a witch and that I am responsible for making Chumba sick, and for all other misfortunes happening there.
- 63. KALAMA:** That's unbelievable! What happened to you, how did you and Chumba manage to escape?
- 64. MALEMBA:** It's a long story, my brother. But first let me know. Can we stay here or not?
- 65. KALAMA:** Ah...I...think...you can...but only for a few days. And Chumba must not be seen! I have never told anyone about him.
- 66. MALEMBA:** That's fine. The only thing is that I also planned to take him to see a specialist at the main hospital. But we will leave early in the morning tomorrow.
- 67. SFX:** **RUSTLING OF NEWSPAPERS**
- 68. KALAMA:** **(to Chumba)** Hey Chumba, what are you doing arranging those newspapers like that? Are you building a tower of newspapers?
- 69. MALEMBA:** That's what he does at home with the firewood all the time.

70. NARRATOR: Chumba's mental condition is characterised by an urge to always arrange things in a line. But what is the name of this condition? We will soon find out. But now let's head back to Kapaka's house. He is suffering from depression, and has just returned home from a walk with his pastor.

SCENE THREE: KAPAKA AND PASTOR RETURN HOME AFTER WALK

71. SFX: DOOR BEING UNLOCKED

72. PASTOR: Oh, that was a refreshing stroll, I must say.

73. CHEUPE: At last the two of you are back. I was beginning to wonder...

74. SFX: INFANT NOISES

75. CHEUPE: So did the two of you talk about stuff?

76. KAPAKA: No, actually we said nothing the entire time. But it was indeed nice to hear the birds sing and see the flowers and nature around us. I had forgotten how beautiful it all is and how blessed we are.

OUTRO:

And those first positive words from Kapaka after such a long time, bring us to the end of the sixth episode of our continuing radio drama on mental illness. What is it that happened outside? Does that mean that Kapaka is out of his depression?

What will happen to Malemba and Chumba in the city? And will Irene find Valerie again? This and more awaits you in our next episode. You can listen to this episode or the any other previous ones by visiting our website at www.dw.de/lbe. And we like to hear your opinions as well: Please share them on our Facebook page. Until next time, goodbye.