

Africa and Its Struggle for Independence (1871–1963)

Characters

KARAWA	<i>African guide</i>	SMITH	<i>African-American soldier</i>
Sir Henry Morton STANLEY	<i>reporter and explorer</i>	Ian MACLEOD	<i>British politician</i>
David LIVINGSTONE	<i>medical missionary and explorer</i>	Harold MACMILLAN	<i>British prime minister</i>
SOLANKE	<i>West African self-rule leader, barrister (lawyer)</i>	MARGARET Kenyatta	<i>Kenyatta's daughter</i>
Jomo KENYATTA	<i>East African leader</i>	HOLMGREN	<i>correspondent for The London Times</i>
OBOTE	<i>soldier from colonial West Africa</i>	POLICE OFFICERS	
ROMO	<i>soldier from colonial East Africa</i>	THUKU	<i>Kenyan correspondent for the East African Chronicle</i>

SCENE I

Near Ujiji, Central Africa. November, 1871.

- KARAWA:** We are very close now, Mr. Stanley.
- STANLEY:** Good. Tell me, Karawa, what do the natives say about Dr. Livingstone?
- KARAWA:** Only good things. He has brought us powerful medicine and education. He is a good Christian man who has fought the evil slave trade.
- (STANLEY's party enters the village and approaches LIVINGSTONE)*
- STANLEY:** He does not look well.
- KARAWA:** He has been very ill and short of supplies.
- STANLEY:** Dr. Livingstone, I presume?
- LIVINGSTONE:** Welcome! You have brought me new life!
- STANLEY:** My name is Henry Stanley. I have been looking for you for several months. The whole world is anxious to learn of your fate here in Africa.
- LIVINGSTONE:** I am equally anxious to learn what's happened beyond Africa these last few years. Please come to my humble house and be my guest.
- STANLEY:** That would be my pleasure. Thank you.



SCENE II

The same, days later

LIVINGSTONE: Henry, throughout my journeys, I have seen the full, ugly, and tragic face of the slave trade. Nothing has done more to weaken and stifle the African people than that diabolical evil.

STANLEY: You have a great love for the African natives?

LIVINGSTONE: Most assuredly . . . and a profound respect as well.

STANLEY: A sentiment I am far from sharing. I had a devil of a time getting here. Most of my porters were unreliable. Only my swift whip kept them in line and the caravan moving.

LIVINGSTONE: A brutal tactic I would never share . . .

STANLEY: But a necessary one. To me, the typical African is no more than a primitive savage . . . always needing a firm hand if you want to get any useful activity from him.

LIVINGSTONE: Savages, you say? And what are the French and the Germans? Did you not tell me the two just ended a most gruesome and destructive war? No, Henry, the Africans do not need a firm and violent hand that only grabs their people and their ivory . . .

STANLEY: What do they need, then?

LIVINGSTONE: A gentle and guiding hand . . . one that reaches out to each African with respect . . . as a person equal in the sight of our Creator.

STANLEY: And if that hand is not forthcoming?

LIVINGSTONE: All will suffer.

SCENE III

57 Castletown Road, London, England. March, 1929.

SOLANKE: So . . . this is the Mr. J. Kenyatta of East Africa. Tell me, what does the “J” stand for?

KENYATTA: Johnstone. My name is Johnstone Kenyatta. I was told that you, a fellow African, could help me get settled in London.

SOLANKE: Is Johnstone your tribal name?

KENYATTA: “Kamau” is. I chose Johnstone when I was baptized at the Scottish mission school.

SOLANKE: Please excuse me if I do not call you by that name . . .

KENYATTA: As you wish . . . but why does it seem to upset you so, Mr. Solanke?



- SOLANKE: Why have you come to London?
- KENYATTA: Why did you not answer my question? I am told you are a very clever barrister, so you know what a question is.
- SOLANKE: I certainly do . . . but we are not in a court of law. In time I will respond to that question.
- KENYATTA: Very well . . . I have come to London as a representative of my people in Kenya. The European settlers are taking away our ancestral lands. I have come to seek justice in this matter from the colonial authorities.
- SOLANKE: Is that the full nature of your mission?
- KENYATTA: Yes . . . I don't understand your tone. Should there be something else?
- SOLANKE: Mr. Kenyatta, my fellow African . . . the European has unjustly taken much more than our land.
- KENYATTA: Please forgive my English. I am having some difficulty understanding you . . .
- SOLANKE: I'm sure the Scottish missionaries taught you the great stories of the Old Testament.
- KENYATTA: Yes . . . I know them well.
- SOLANKE: The story of Jacob and Esau?
- KENYATTA: The twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah . . .
- SOLANKE: When the hungry Esau returned from hunting, what did his brother Jacob do?
- KENYATTA: He gave the hungry Esau a bowl of stew.
- SOLANKE: Did he offer it freely, with kindness and generosity in his heart?
- KENYATTA: No. Jacob demanded his brother's birthright as payment.
- SOLANKE: Which Esau foolishly gave up because he was only concerned with his present hunger.
- KENYATTA: Now I understand why you are called a clever barrister. I see the reason for telling this story.
- SOLANKE: Excellent. The reasons for our suffering and humiliation are very simple: we Africans have sold our birthrights for bowls of stew, except we know the stew as railroads, machines, amusing gadgets, and empty promises.
- KENYATTA: What should we Africans do?
- SOLANKE: First of all, be proud of being an African. The European tricks us into thinking he is superior to us. That is wrong. That is a lie!
- KENYATTA: Their education is very powerful.



- SOLANKE: Of course it is! And I have taken full advantage of it here in England—as you should, too. But the European is not the owner of learning, only a caretaker.
- KENYATTA: What about the religion of the European missionaries?
- SOLANKE: Again . . . the same point. They do not own it. And remember . . . Christianity teaches freedom.
- KENYATTA: Yes What else we should we do?
- SOLANKE: In 1885 the colonial powers met in Berlin, Germany. There, they carved up Africa without regard to our tribal boundaries. They did this for a reason: to make it easier to control us.
- KENYATTA: One tribe cannot throw off the colonial yoke.
- SOLANKE: You are very astute, indeed. That’s why we Africans must strive for unity—a unity beyond the unity of our tribes.
- KENYATTA: That will be a very difficult task. There is much jealousy amongst the tribes.
- SOLANKE: I know, but unity is the only way we’ll achieve our birthright: justice and self-rule.
- KENYATTA: This has been a most productive visit . . .
- SOLANKE: Mr. Kenyatta, consider a new first name.
- KENYATTA: I like *Jomo*, which means “burning spear.”

SCENE IV

Hyde Park, London, England. October, 1945.

- OBOTE: What say we ask this Yank to join us?
- ROMO: Of course He looks like a friendly mate.
- OBOTE: Yo! Yank! Come join us for some fish and chips.
- SMITH: Why . . . thank you. That’s most considerate. Say, what unit are you guys in? You don’t sound like you’re from the States. My name is Homer Smith . . . I’m from Mississippi.
- ROMO: Pleased to meet you. Matthew Romo, Kenya.
- OBOTE: John Obote, Nigeria. My pleasure.
- ROMO: I’ll lead the way . . .
- (They enter a restaurant)*
- SMITH: I think this is only the second time I’ve ever eaten in the same restaurant with white people.
- OBOTE: We know what you mean . . .



- ROMO: Wars tend to change things . . .
- SMITH: They better. When I get home I'm not going to let them treat me like they did before I left the States . . . I didn't stand up to those German machine guns for nothing! I'll stand up to Jim Crow, too!
- ROMO: I've read about your "Jim Crow" laws. It is much the same for us in Kenya.
- OBOTE: Matthew, I think we've found a kindred spirit in Homer Smith.
- ROMO: I agree. Homer, what are your plans for the next week?
- SMITH: No plans. I have a five-day pass.
- OBOTE: Would you like to accompany us to Manchester?
- SMITH: Sure. What's going on up there?
- ROMO: Something called a Pan-African Congress.
- SMITH: What's it all about?
- OBOTE: People like us who are struggling for our rights . . . speaking, planning, meeting.
- ROMO: Mr. Kenyatta from my country will be there.
- OBOTE: And Mr. Nkrumah from West Africa as well.
- SMITH: I'm willing, though I've never heard about any of these men.
- ROMO: You will not feel left out. W.E.B. Dubois, the great scholar and educator from the United States, will also be attending.
- SMITH: Sounds great! Just give me a minute to get my bag.

SCENE V

KENYATTA home, Githunguri, Kenya. October 20, 1952.

- MARGARET: Father, you have an appointment with a *London Times* correspondent . . .
- (Enter HOLMGREN)
- KENYATTA: Yes . . . a fine newspaper . . . You may begin.
- HOLMGREN: Thank you. The Mau Mau rebellion is intensifying. Numerous white settlers have been massacred in their highland farms. What is your response?
- KENYATTA: This is a great tragedy for all of Kenya. But let us more carefully examine the numbers. Less than a hundred European settlers have died. Most of the dead have been Africans. There has been more propaganda than truth in reporting the Mau Mau uprising in the European press.
- HOLMGREN: You are the undeniable leader and spokesman of the native Kenyans. What is your position regarding the Mau Mau?



- KENYATTA: It is a great evil. I have said so many times.
- MARGARET: To a stadium filled with thirty thousand people!
- HOLMGREN: Why then do the authorities claim you are the mastermind behind this movement? My sources tell me your arrest is imminent.
- KENYATTA: They need what the Old Testament calls a “scapegoat” . . . something or someone innocent who will bear the blame for their sins.
- HOLMGREN: What sins in particular?
- KENYATTA: Taking our land . . . treating us unjustly as inferiors. The colonial government and its supporters are responsible for the Mau Mau, not me.
- HOLMGREN: Am I correct in inferring that you . . . in the interests of justice . . . condone the Mau Mau?
- KENYATTA: I am a man of peace and justice. The Mau Mau do evil, but they are not evil people.
- HOLMGREN: How can you separate the two?
- KENYATTA: The sons and daughters of the Mau Mau are like the prodigal son in the Bible story. Their actions break my heart, but I love them as my children.
- MARGARET: Please understand that our people refer to my father as *Mzee* meaning “father of his people.”
- HOLMGREN: Do you ultimately wish to see all the settlers return to Europe and India? In other words, do you seek an all-black Kenya?
- KENYATTA: I said I was a man of peace and justice. Any race that cannot accept justice and equality for all is not welcome and should not stay.
- HOLMGREN: Who, then, should rule Kenya?
- KENYATTA: The people who live here, not in London.
- MARGARET: My father believes in majority rule.
- HOLMGREN: The latest figures say Kenya is comprised of five million Africans and about thirty thousand Europeans and Indians.
- KENYATTA: Then you should have no misunderstanding of my political goals for Kenya.

(Loud knock at the door)

POLICE

OFFICERS: Open up!

MARGARET: Father, the police are here. I think this time they have come to arrest you.

KENYATTA: Do not worry, my daughter. I have expected this for a long time. Be strong . . . and be well . . .

(POLICE OFFICERS enter and arrest KENYATTA)



SCENE VI

10 Downing Street, London, England. October, 1959.

- MACLEOD: Congratulations, Prime Minister! A most smashing victory for you and the party A real mandate for “steady the course.”
- MACMILLAN: Yes . . . but not for our policy regarding the African colonies. I want to chart a new course there . . . with you in the pilot’s seat as the new colonial secretary.
- MACLEOD: I appreciate your confidence in me. Do I detect a note of urgency in your tone? Is there some great new crisis erupting?
- MACMILLAN: Yes, especially if we don’t act now with courage, imagination, and good faith.
- MACLEOD: I assume you are referring to the independence movement.
- MACMILLAN: Of course. Today, it’s neither practical nor morally acceptable for Great Britain to remain a colonial power in Africa. We must honor our African subjects’ legitimate political rights. And furthermore we can have no more tragic incidents like the Hola prison one in Kenya! Eleven prisoner deaths. All Mau Mau supporters. All killed by the camp guards.
- MACLEOD: A most regrettable and embarrassing affair What kind of timetable for African independence are you considering?
- MACMILLAN: One that convinces the African leaders we are sincere and acting in good faith. We’ve already made a good start in West Africa by granting Ghana its independence.
- MACLEOD: Indeed, there was no denying Dr. Nkrumah.
- MACMILLAN: And the same goes for other popular leaders like Dr. Banda in Rhodesia and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya.
- MACLEOD: Excuse me, but aren’t they both in jail or under house arrest?
- MACMILLAN: Unfortunately, yes. I want you to do everything you can to secure their release. We cannot have a peaceful and orderly transfer of power without their leadership. They speak for the masses.
- MACLEOD: I understand . . . but will Parliament understand, or the Europeans in Africa, or the Africans themselves? This plan of yours is a rather bold departure . . .
- MACMILLAN: I know . . . that’s why I’m planning to start the new year with a six-week tour of Africa. I will personally signal this government’s new colonial policy.
- MACLEOD: That’s comforting . . . but what will you say?
- MACMILLAN: “The winds of change are blowing across Africa . . .” We cannot ignore them. African independence is inevitable.
- MACLEOD: Will you propose any specific policies?



- MACMILLAN: Yes. Great Britain will pledge to deal with her former African colonies as equals.
- MACLEOD: In other words, a nonracial policy. I doubt South Africa will climb aboard that train. They seem to be heading in the opposite direction with their apartheid system.
- MACMILLAN: A most sad, cruel, and misguided policy . . . Well, are you up for the job?
- MACLEOD: How could I refuse? After all, a Scotsman like me first got us linked up with Africa.
- MACMILLAN: (*Laughing*) Ian, are you trying to get me to say, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume”?
- MACLEOD: You are quick, Mr. Prime Minister . . . very quick.
- MACMILLAN: Thank you. Now let’s get moving quickly on Africa.

SCENE VII

Outside Detention House, Maralal, Kenya. April 11, 1961.

- MARGARET: The colonial authorities have given my father permission to meet with the press. Please note that he has suffered a long and painful ordeal. Six years at Lokitaung Prison, and two years under house arrest and exile in remote Lodwar.
- THUKU: *Mzee* Kenyatta, what was the worst part of your imprisonment?
- KENYATTA: Being apart from my people.
- HOLMGREN: How were you treated? What were the conditions like?
- KENYATTA: At Lokitaung there were only five prisoners. We were kept apart except for a few minutes at mealtime. We slept on mats on a stone floor. I was forced to shave my beard.
- THUKU: Were you forced to wear ankle irons?
- KENYATTA: Yes, for much of the time.
- HOLMGREN: Please comment on the present state of your health.
- MARGARET: My father was nearly sixty when he first entered Lokitaung. He suffered painful skin maladies and lost all his natural teeth.
- HOLMGREN: Was your life ever in danger?
- KENYATTA: Two fellow prisoners, traitors to our cause, tried to kill me with knives. Another prisoner and I subdued them.
- THUKU: Your trial was a travesty of justice, even by British colonial standards. Your confinement was cruel and dehumanizing . . . Certainly you must harbor great hostility toward the British.

- KENYATTA: Throughout Africa others like me have suffered for freedom and justice. I have learned to suffer without bitterness. I hate no one.
- HOLMGREN: Ever since Prime Minister Macmillan's African trip, self-rule for Britain's African colonies appears inevitable. Any comment?
- KENYATTA: As he himself said in South Africa, "The winds of change are blowing across Africa . . ." Mr. Macmillan is a wise leader.
- HOLMGREN: It's no British state secret that Kenya is ungovernable without your participation, Mr. Kenyatta, and that your full release is imminent. What will you do then?
- KENYATTA: Go to my people—
- MARGARET: And wait to be called to his destiny: to lead a free and independent Kenya.
- HOLMGREN: When that day comes . . . I'm sure you would win any open election. What would you say to the people of Kenya?
- KENYATTA: What I have said so many times . . . All who wish to live in justice, equality, and mutual respect are welcome to build a new Kenya. And I would add that we must all work hard and have no more to do with crime and moral corruption. To all the Kenyans of every tribe and race I would say, "*Harambee!*"
- HOLMGREN: What does "harambee" mean?
- MARGARET: It's an old work chant of our people from the coast. It means "pull together."

SCENE VIII

Independence Day ceremonies, Nairobi, Kenya. December 12, 1963.

- KENYATTA: Today I speak to you as president of a free and independent Kenya. This is a great day for all Kenyans and all the peoples of Africa. The struggle has been long and difficult. But let us not grow weary. Let us together, in peace and harmony, build a new and proud Kenya. Harambee!



