

## Ajoda Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April transcript

Whether to go to England discussions in the family

The family are sitting down for a meal.

Father (James): I am considering going back to England, at least for a while. So I decided I should bring this to the family's notice and have your comments. I propose to leave in three months time. You know we have relations living in many parts of England. I plan to visit them. I plan to stay for about three years and this is why I have called this family gathering.

Son (Remy): Very nice of you Dad to tell us about your plans for going abroad. I wish you would stay and that we could spend time together, but you are entitled to do what you like. We'll be missing you as the head of the family. But I have no choice, so I can only wish you a good stay over there. We'll want to hear from you by letter and telephone.

Elizabeth: I'd like to know if England has changed. I want you to visit Trafalgar Square and Oxford Street, Regent Street and Hyde Park Corner.... That was a famous place when I was visiting there.

Wife (Modupe): Well darling, I am surprised. You want to leave me alone with the children. This is the time we need to be together to bring up these children together. To make matters worse, you are leaving me. What if you find another woman in England? Then you would forget us and abandon us. Do you think you can live alone without a woman? You are not even thinking of bringing me to England or me following you and later on bringing the children to England. I completely disagree. If you don't need me any more, if I am too old for you and you want a new wife.... Well, I think you are looking for an excuse to separate yourself from me and your children.

Remy: Mum, I am on your side. I am very surprised that you have not even told Mum about this before this family meal. You should bring Mummy along, or is there something overseas that you do not want us to know about.. Remember, we are your blood,. If anything happens to you, it is we, your family, who are going to stand by you. So, it would be nice if you include Mum in your plans.

Elizabeth: Daddy needs to go for his work He won't stay in England permanently, just a short time.

James: We have family .....in America, Amsterdam and England. Even grandchildren over there. I want to visit them. It's easy to fly from Europe to America, just a short flight, so we can all be in touch. I'll go just for one year and see how things go. Mummy is at home, but she can always come and join me.

Remy: I hope Daddy will send us nice shirts and trousers. I'm going to tell all my friends, "Dad's abroad." So I hope you'll send me nice jeans so I can show off. Don't let me down.

Wife: I've said my piece and I am still sceptical about your plan. But I have no choice. If you have made up your mind to go, nobody can stop you. But you must remember that you still have your children here in Nigeria. You'll need to send us some money. I'm still working, but the salary will not be enough for the expenses. I'll have to pay the rent, the school fees and school uniforms, the children have to wear

good clothing and good shoes to go to church and all that sort of thing. We have to eat, and remember grandma, your mother, is here. I'll have to look after her as well. We'll have to know what you're doing. Make sure you keep to what you told us. Make sure you don't go to England looking for young girls. That's all I have to say.

Older brother (Tunde): It will be beneficial to the family if you go there. I can help take care of Mama and of your family here. You go and make friends there and the wife and children can follow. They have heard about Europe and London and I'm sure they want to go and see for themselves what it is like. I believe this family will grow prosperous through this plan and our prestige will be greater.

Elizabeth: If you go, don't forget your wife and children. Have them in your mind. I want to be hearing from you from time to time. You know that I'm getting old. I would not like to die while you are away. So go as quickly as possible and come back soon.

Pam: Daddy, I've heard so much about England and I want to come with you now. I could look after you over there. I don't want you to forget me.

Mother: Don't worry. He won't forget you. He'll come back. And I'll wait for you husband, but we must sit down together and sort things out properly.

Daddy (to daughter): You must finish your secondary schooling first. Then you can study further in England and it will be easy for you to pursue any profession any course, any vocation you wanted to. So stay home and finish your school studies first. I'll send for you at the proper time. For the moment, I'll send you nice shoes and you can go to church and show them to your friends. Tell them your daddy lives in England.

Retirement to England:

Remy: I want to be in England because of the peaceful life, the quietness. And I love the discipline of the winter, when you work hard and eat well and dress well.

James (as uncle who is living in England and is over on a visit): Things have changed so much in England since you were there in the 1950s and 60s. You would enjoy the tranquillity, the health services and the transport. I'm just here for 2 or 3 weeks and then I'm going back. But if you decide to come over and if there is anything I can do for you then get in touch.

Remy: The standard of living is so high over there. People say "If you are fed up with London you are fed up with life. How do you measure the standard of living of a country? Here the electricity is not reliable, there's not enough water, no transportation. I just want to enjoy the later part of my life and relax in England. England is a lovely place. I've been to other countries but England is special. It is the mother of all commonwealth countries. People can feel secure there and there are rules for everything. Wherever you lay your heart is your home. Life is too short.

Elizabeth (as Mum): I hope you will get me something... a lace material that you said you would send me from Liverpool Street. I need to appear very well to my friends in

the church. They all know that I've got a son who is just back from England on holiday. Otherwise, give me money to go and purchase something for myself.

Modupe (wife): Thank you very much for your plan, especially for your son and me. As for me, I am not willing to come over to England yet. I want to be able to work up to the age when I'll be bale to collect my pension. I don't like to lose that opportunity. If I go to England now, I'll have to start all over again. And the pension here will be forfeited because I haven't reached retirement age. You know I'm the only child and I have to look after the parents now. At the moment it's just not possible. Not right now.

On pensions and retirement:

Modupe: In Nigeria they don't pay the pensions at the right time. There's delay and they lose the papers. Pensions are upside down there. They can't find your file, so they don't know how much to pay you. In a country like England, they know your rights and they give you your rights at the right time.

Remy: It's a different world entirely.

Elizabeth: Half my children are here and half are in Nigeria. They refuse to come here. They don't like it except on holidays. And we take the others who live here to Africa so that they know our culture.

On life in retirement:

Elizabeth: I came to join my husband. I enjoy our time here. I go to meetings at Ajoda. I see my grandchildren. Two are staying with me. They make us happy. I am living in Woolwich in a flat in a two-bedroomed apartment. One is 16 and one is 10, they are boy and girl so I am telling Greenwich Council we need a bigger house. They didn't answer us yet and I suppose there are a lot of people competing for houses.

Tunde: I'm living with my daughter. I reached my retirement and she said my wife and I should come and rest here. I pass my time in the library and walking and doing exercise.