

THE STORIES: SBAB



First name: **SHEIKHOMAR**

Last name: **BAH**

Age: **20**

Country of origin: **GAMBIA**

Living in **Italy** since: **2014**

SHORT SUMMARY

Sheikhoma Bah (Sbah) is from The Gambia. He left his country because of problems which occurred within his father's family. So he left The Gambia in search of a better and more peaceful life. He travel from Gambia to Libya then took the decision to pay for a boat to Europe. For three days they sailed in the Mediterranean Sea not knowing where they were or where they were going. On the fourth day they were rescued by a large ship and brought to Italy.

"... MAKE LOVE RAINS"

SBAH'S STORY

Sheikhomar Bah is from The Gambia and left his country because of problems which occurred within his father's family, due to a dispute over land given to his father by his grandfather before he died. Sbah's uncle and fathers brothers, were not happy about this decision and decide to argue and fight with Sbah's father so that they could take the land for themselves. Initially they decide

to talk to my father first about the land to try and come to an agreement, but after talking with him they still couldn't agree with the decision. One day the brothers decided to call Sbah's father for a meeting late at night. Sbah urged his father don't go as he felt it was unsafe and too late at night to meet people like his brothers as they are not good people. Sbah's father told him not to worry, that nothing will happen and went to meet with his brothers. Later that evening Sbahs father returned home suffering from injuries which had been inflicted upon him by his brothers. He was immediately admitted to hospital and a police report made against the brothers. Sbahs father later died in hospital from his injuries. One year later the brothers came to their house to talk to Sbah's mother about his father's properties and land. His mother told them to go speak with Sheikhomar as he is the only male son of his father and inherited his father's land and properties. Sbah refused to give the land to his uncles because he wanted it in order to look after his mother and to earn money for his sister's education. As a result of this Sbah became fearful that his uncles would inflict the same injuries to him as they did to his father.

CONFLICT AND ESCAPE

Sbah's mother told him to try and leave the country to avoid the fate of his father. He did not think twice about this and followed his mother's advice. In doing so he has made it difficult for his uncles to claim the land as they are unable to make the agreement while he is in another country. So he left The Gambia in search of a better and more peaceful life.

Initially Sbah left The Gambia and traveled to Senegal. He soon realized that it was too difficult for him to live in Senegal and he moved to Mali, where he

My friends in Italy see me as a brother.

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stayed for a while but soon realized that actually the opportunities were not much better than in Senegal and he moved forward to Burkina Fasso where he stayed for a short while. Whilst there he met people heading to Libya in search of work and a better future and security. In order to find money to travel to Libya, Sabh headed to Niger to find work. Eventually he made enough money to pay for a pickup truck to take him to Libya and finally to Tripoli. Once there Sbah was surprised by how people were suffering there. Sbah then took the decision to pay for a boat to Europe. For three days they sailed in the Mediterranean Sea not knowing where they were or where they were going. On the fourth day they were rescued by a large ship and brought to Italy.

STRUGGLING IN THE NEW SOCIETY

Sbah was initially surprised by the welcoming in Italy. *'It was a dream come true I see how Italians welcome me they were very nice to us we arrived in Pozzallo Sicily.'* They took him and the others from the boat to an Emergency camp where they could eat, shower and a bed where we could sleep. *'It was the most beautiful thing someone have done for me and the people of Sicilia were very nice to us, they make us feel like we home, it was the most beautiful thing.'* There Sbah began to learn the language which he found difficult and felt he would never able to speak this language. He then moved to Foligno for a few days. Sbah found people in Foligno to be nice and friendly, and was humbled by this. *'It's not easy to go to a place and expect everyone will like you. Of course some will like you, and some will not. But I try to adopt their culture.'* Sbah started going to school to continue to learn the language. He is now able to talk with any Italian without feeling any pressure. *'I love Italy. I love their culture and I love the people.'*

BELONGING AND GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY

Currently Sbah is going to school in Foligno to completed his education. He is working as a help cook in a restaurant in Foligno. He is also working on a voluntary basis with 'Caritas' to help others refugees to integrate in Foligno. He now has a permit to stay in Italy with Humanitarian protection, and would like to be a mechanic or a football player. He is part of a theater group at ZOE GARAGE at ZUT. He is also part of music band of African traditional music mixed with jazz, created in Foligno in 2016 called '**Gan Scorpions**'. It is composed by five people from Gambia and two Italians, one of them a very prestigious pianist called Giovanni Guide. Sbah has many Italian friends in Foligno. They are so nice to him and they all see him as a brother and as a friend, and he has a lot of love for them, and in return they also love him too.

'I fought and put my life at risk to be here and that does not mean I do not love my country. I love my country more than any other place in the world. And, I love my family more than any other thing is this whole world and I always wish to be with them for the rest of my life. But do not forget, when you plan something, God is also planning something else for you.'

I never wished to leave my family but no one can know what will happen tomorrow and the difficulties that may arise. When the trouble comes to you try to face them because your life is much more precious.

I left my country for my own safety. I have traveled so far away. The journey made me know ledgable and I learned so many things, too many. I've seen things I would never have expected. I have experienced life. I learned to understand people. I learned to know what's going on in different parts of the world.

I learned to love.

Now, I am in Italy.

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Here there are people who appreciate me but others do not. But in this world you cannot be loved by all. I have a reason to be here. Some people understand. Others do not, instead, stops on the street and tells you "Negro, go back to your country".

People who do not know how to love. People who do not know how difficult life can be.

You will suffer by hearing all these names, much more worse. But you still need to try and build your own life. They do not know that this world doesn't come with borders, we the human build them to keep others out.

Today many bad things are happening in this world and is all because of hatred.

Let's try together to build love and make love rains in this world. As they say: United we stand stronger, divided we fall.

Let's make love rains in this world'

Sheikhoma Bah

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