

Flames of Freedom Podcast Episode 6 (10)

"Darkening Clouds"

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This is a production of Lance Toland Entertainment.

FLAMES OF FREEDOM

EPISODE 6: DARKENING CLOUDS

FADE IN UNDER  
OPENING MUSIC:

SFX: OPENING MUSIC

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Flames of Freedom, Episode 6: Darkening Clouds, a docudrama based on actual historical events brought to you by Lance Toland Entertainment. In the previous episode, all of our characters from Portugal shed their Catholic identities and adopted Jewish names. Diogo Nunes became Samuel. His wife Gracia became Rebekah. Their sons Manoel and André assumed the names Moses and Daniel. Their daughter Theresa chose Ester, and Abrão, her husband-to-be, liked his name the way it was, so he stayed with the English translation--Abraham. Their other daughter Isabel, became Rachel, so her husband-to-be, Rodrigo, chose Jacob. And their youngest daughter, Maria, the narrator of our story, became Zipporah. Gracia's sister, Teresa, took the name Abigail, after Abigail Minis, and Lucio Gama, known and appreciated for his enormous heart and the many ways he was a source of comfort for the Nunes family, became known as Noah, Shem Noah.

The previous episode concluded with Daniel and Moses, Samuel and Rebecca's sons, confronting the fact that they have few prospects for advancement in London as they continually experience the antipathy that the English have for Jews.

SFX: hammering of rock and shouts of men working on a construction site

SUPERVISOR

(in cockney)

'eh, paw'uguese picos, pick up 'he pace. Dis ain'' no bloody tea par'y.

MOSES

(under his breath to  
André)

If that imbecile calls me a dick one more time...

DANIEL

(under his breath)

Don't pay any attention to him. Do you want to get us fired? Remember, our family needs the money.

MOSES

(under his breath)

You don't need to remind me. When those sons of bitches at the synagogue said they'd help us find work, I never thought it meant I'd be digging ditches for some cretin.

SUPERVISOR

(in cockney)

I said pick up 'he pace. Wha' don'' you idio's understand abou' 'ha'?

MOSES

Vá se foder.

SUPERVISOR

(in cockney)

Wha' did you say?

ANDRÉ

He says we're on it, boss. We're working as hard as we can.

SUPERVISOR

Then wawk a li''le 'arder.

ANDRÉ

You've got it, boss.

MOSES

(louder)

That son of a bitch can go to hell.

SUPERVISOR

I 'eard 'ha' you pricks. Ge' off my  
si'e. You're fired. You 'ear me.  
I'll pu' 'he wawd ou' an' you'll  
never ge' ano'her job on a  
construc'ion si'e. Nah ge' ou' o f  
'ere befawe i bus' your loaf of  
bread open wi'h a shovel!

END RECAP

SFX: Musical transition

BENJAMIN

Nonna, if your brothers couldn't  
find work, how could things get  
much worse?

ZIPPORAH

Oh, things had a way of getting  
worse before they got better. Not  
only could my brothers not find  
work, but my father, one of the  
most distinguished doctors in  
Portugal, could not find anyone in  
England willing to give him a  
chance, starting with the renowned  
doctor James Harrison, on Fleet  
Street...

SFX: musical transtion

DR. JAMES HARRISON

Dr. Nunes, I appreciate you coming  
by. We just don't have a call for  
another physician at this time. I'm  
certain you'll find a place to  
practice, given your outstanding  
credentials...

ZIPPORAH

The rejections kept coming...

DR. CRANSTON TAYLOR

Quite frankly, I just think that  
language would be a serious barrier  
with many of our patients. Have you  
spoken with Dr. Rodriguez? His  
office is just off Aldgate, and he  
cares for many of the city's  
prominent Jews...

ZIPPORAH

Dr. Rodriguez was less than helpful...

DOCTOR RODRIQUEZ

We have infectious diseases covered in the practice, but we most appreciate your inquiry. Have you spoken with Doctor Jimenez?

ZIPPORAH

My father was relentless and spoke with nearly every doctor in London, but no one seemed to be interested in a Jewish doctor in his sixties, regardless of the strength of his credentials. Perhaps it's because he spoke with an accent and his assistant was a man of mixed race from Africa. After the last rejection, Shem Noah suggested that maybe it was his fault that they hadn't found work.

SFX: busy street corner; SFX of carriages going by

SHEM NOAH

It seems there isn't a place for both of us. Do you think it's because of me?

SAMUEL

You? Why would it be you, Shem Noah?

SHEM NOAH

For starters, the color of my skin.

SAMUEL

No, no. I think it's me. It's my age. And don't forget we're both foreigners here. No one cares about who I treated in the past, my credentials, or if the King of Portugal considered me the best doctor in the land.

SHEM NOAH

If only they knew how gifted a physician you are.

SAMUEL

It looks like they will never know.  
What if we created our own  
practice? We could use the room in  
the back of the house.

SHEM NOAH

But how would we find paying  
patients? We never had to worry  
about that in Lisbon.

SAMUEL

We can't keep looking back. I'll  
get the word out at the synagogue.  
You'll see, in no time, we'll have  
patients lined up down the street,  
and some of these famous doctors we  
have been visiting will be begging  
us for our help.

SFX: MUSICAL TRANSITION

ZIPPORAH

So that's what my father did. And  
soon, we did have patients lining  
up to see him. But there was one  
problem. Most of them were poor and  
had no money. They were refugees  
like us!

BENJAMIN

How did you survive?

ZIPPORAH

We carefully watched every  
farthing. But a shortage of money  
was not the only challenge. Moses  
and André were losing patience, not  
able to find productive work. Or  
keep it. And it seemed that  
whatever they earned at odd jobs  
during the day, they consumed at  
all hours, day and night, something  
they couldn't hide from my mother  
when they returned home one  
afternoon.

SFX: Moses and Daniel quietly enter the front door, stumbling  
drunk.

REBEKAH

What are the two of you doing here  
at this hour? Why aren't you  
working? Have you been drinking?

SFX: Moses and Daniel are laughing.

DANIEL

We would be working if we had a  
job.

REBEKAH

What do you mean if you had a job?  
You have jobs!

MOSES

No longer, *mamae*.

REBEKAH

What happened this time?

DANIEL

We were minding our business.  
Working hard. Until...

REBEKAH

Until what?

DANIEL

*Mamae*, we can only take so much  
abuse. Moses and I were moving a  
large stone with our wheelbarrow  
when our boss came over with his  
stick and prodded Moses, saying he  
was a lazy Jew. That was the last  
straw, *Mamae*.

REBEKAH

You got into a fight?

DANIEL

No *Mama*. He just grabbed the stick  
out of his hand and chased him down  
the road. You should have seen it.  
Everyone was laughing.

REBEKAH

So you were fired and then spent  
good money at the pub. Money we  
could have used.

DANIEL

Sorry, *Mamae*.

REBEKAH

We are depending on the two of you. Your father is working for next to nothing. He's lucky if patients pay him with an onion or a chicken. How do you expect us to survive and keep a roof over our heads?

MOSES

Don't worry, Mama. We'll get another job.

REBEKAH

Don't worry, he says. You're grown men. When will you start acting like it and take some responsibility?

ZIPPORAH

My mother turned and headed back to the kitchen, leaving Moses and Daniel staring at the floor in shame.

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

Even though my father was earning next to nothing, in his own way he was making a difference in people's lives.

SAMUEL

That should do it. Just replace your son's bandage every morning. If it doesn't begin to scab over within a week, come back to see me.

MRS. SILVA

Replace it every day? We have no bandages. And my husband hasn't yet found work.

SAMUEL

Noah, please go into the closet and get Mrs. Silva some bandages.

SFX: Noah opens the closet door.

MRS. SILVA

Dr. Nunes, I don't know how I can repay you. I promise, as soon as my husband finds a job...



SAMUEL

...there will be no charge, Mrs. Silva. Just glad to be of help.

MRS. SILVA

Doctor, thank you.

SFX: door opening and woman and patient departing.

SHEM NOAH

Now, we're giving away our services and our supplies for free?

SAMUEL

Noah, if her husband is fortunate enough to find work, which do you think will come first? Buying food to survive, or paying us? Telling her she owes me money will only burden her, and she'll feel so guilty that she won't bring her child to me unless he's at death's door.

SHEM NOAH

Yes, but how will we survive if everything we do is an act of charity?

SAMUEL

I don't know. But we must have faith.

SHEM NOAH

But I don't know too many grocers who will take faith as a payment.

SAMUEL

I agree. But turning people away who need help. What kind of people would we be if we did that?

SFX: sound transition

ZIPPORAH

Of course, I was shielded from most of these financial difficulties. For me, London was an exciting adventure. But two events changed all of that. I remember them as though it was yesterday. One Friday afternoon, we were in the kitchen preparing the Shabbat meal...

REBEKAH

Girls, I am not feeling well.  
Rachel, can you take over the  
preparations for dinner?

RACHEL

What is it, mammae?

REBEKAH

The baby has been very active. I  
just need to lie down for a bit.

ZIPPORAH

My mother attempted to get up but  
collapsed on the floor.

RACHEL

Mamae!

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Zipporah, run and get Papa and Shem  
Noah.

SFX: footsteps and door opening in the back of house

ZIPPORAH

Papa, Shem Noah, come quick, it's  
mamae.

SFX: footsteps.

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

By the time we returned to the  
kitchen, a small pool of blood had  
formed under where my mother was  
lying.

SAMUEL

Girls, boil some water. Noah, help  
me carry her upstairs to the bed.

SFX: Shem Noah lifting her up in his arms and carrying her up  
the wooden stairs.

ZIPPORAH

Every few minutes, we'd bring up  
boiled water and fresh towels. Shem  
Noah would take them, then shut the  
door. Inside, we could hear his  
whispers to my father.

SHEM NOAH

Is she losing the baby?

SAMUEL

It certainly looks that way, but let's hope it's just early contractions.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Her pulse is erratic but I have seen worse.

SHEM NOAH

Is she in danger?

SAMUEL

Not at the moment, but the next few minutes will let us know. Rebekah, dear, can you hear me?

REBEKAH

(faintly)

Yes.

SAMUEL

Listen carefully. Our baby appears to be coming early. I am going to do everything in my power to save it. I need you to keep breathing evenly.

REBEKAH

(deep, even breaths)

SAMUEL

Yes, like that. Good. Keep it up. The baby's head is cresting.

REBEKAH

(faintly)

It's too early. Can't you do something to stop it? Shouldn't we call the midwife?

SAMUEL

No time for that, my dear. Please, stay with me, I'm doing everything I can. Just keep breathing. Noah, get me a clean sheet. It's in the cabinet behind you.

REBEKAH

God, it hurts.

SAMUEL

Keep breathing. And on the next contraction, I want you to push.

REBEKAH

(screaming)

Diogo! The pain. I can't take it.

SAMUEL

Noah, go down to the surgery and bring me some willow bark.

SFX: door opening and shutting; footsteps on the stairs going down. A few moments later footsteps racing back up the stairs.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Rebekah, dear, chew on this. It will help you with the pain. Now, push hard.

SFX: continued screams by Rebekah

ZIPPORAH

Five minutes later, the baby was born, not breathing. Nothing my father or Shem Noah did could revive it. As my mother rested, the rest of the rest of us gathered around the kitchen table. A few minutes later, Moses and Daniel joined us. When my father came downstairs, he stood at the head of the table with tears in his eyes.

RACHEL

Papa?

SAMUEL

I'm sorry. There simply was nothing I could do. We lost the baby.

ZIPPORAH

And mama? Is she going to be alright?

SAMUEL

Yes, I think she will come through this fine. She will need to rest these next few weeks as much as possible.

ESTER

What can we do to help?

SAMUEL

I know things have not been how many of you would have liked. For now, please, no complaining. Let's come together as a family. I need that from all of you.

MOSES

Papa, you can count on us. We'll do whatever it takes.

SAMUEL

Good. Ester and Rachel, please come up with me to help clean up your mother. Daniel, run and get Rabbi Nieto and let him know what happened. We have to make arrangements to bury the child.

ZIPPORAH

Papa, was it a girl or a boy?

SAMUEL

(hesitating)  
A boy.

ZIPPORAH

(crying)  
Poor baby Aviv...

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

Later that day, Rabbi Nieto came to our home, and I escorted him up to my parents' bedroom, where my father was sitting on the edge of the bed beside my mother, who was propped up with pillows.

RABBI NIETO

Rebekah, how are you feeling?

REBEKAH

Not bad. But they won't let me get up and do anything.

RABBI NIETO

That's wise. You need your rest.

REBEKAH

When will the funeral be? I want to attend.

RABBI NIETO

That's why I came to speak with you and to explain. According to Jewish law, if a child is stillborn like yours, we traditionally do not perform any of the practices of mourning.

REBEKAH

What do you mean?

RABBI NIETO

The baby, we have already buried it in the cemetery...

REBEKAH

Without me!

RABBI NIETO

It is best this way. We have found that it helps parents move on. According to Jewish law, if a baby doesn't live past thirty days, it's not considered a life.

REBEKAH

(sobbing)

It's not considered a life. I carried him for seven months. He was alive inside of me...

RABBI NIETO

I understand...

REBEKAH

No, you don't. Get out. Please, leave me alone.

SAMUEL

Love, it is best this way.

REBEKAH

Leave me, I said!

ZIPPORAH

My father motioned to the Rabbi to join him in the hallway.

SFX: footsteps and door opening and closing.

SAMUEL

(whispering)

She'll be fine. Just give her time.

RABBI NIETO

I'm sorry. I must bow to the wisdom of the rabbis, who are much wiser than me when it comes to grief and mourning.

SAMUEL

What about a headstone so Rebekah can visit the grave?

RABBI NIETO

Even that is prohibited. I am sorry.

SAMUEL

Very well. Thank you for coming.

SFX: MUSICAL TRANSITION

BENJAMIN

There was no funeral, then?

ZIPPORAH

No. And none of us ever visited the graveyard. I had a small rag doll and secretly named it Aviv. But, like the headstone, that was also lost along the way. And just when things were getting back to normal, one night, I woke up to shouts in the living room. I later found out what had happened when my brothers and Shem Noah went to a local pub...

SFX: Pub

PROPRIETOR

We don't serve no Blackmoor slaves here.

MOSES

He's not a slave. He's actually my brother.

PROPRIETOR

I don't care what he is. I won't have 'im in my pub.

SFX: Moses pushing back his chair.

MOSES

He's my brother, I said, and you'll serve him just like you serve us.

PROPRIETOR

You Jews think you can come in and tell me how to run my pub?

SHEM NOAH

Moses, come, let's get out of here. We don't want any trouble.

PROPRIETOR

Listen to your darkee. Now get out.

ZIPPORAH

My brother Moses grabbed the proprietor by the shirt, who in turn hit him in the face. A brawl broke out, with the rest of the customers weighing in on behalf of the proprietor.

SFX: bar fight; tables and chairs being broken. Fists landing and bodies being kicked.

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

Later that evening Moses and Daniel, badly beaten themselves, carried Shem Noah into the living room and laid him gently on the floor, his face battered and beaten, and he was barely breathing. My father came to the head of the stairs.

SAMUEL

Boys, is that you?

DANIEL

Papa, come down here. Quick. We need your help.

SFX: Samuel rushing down the stairs.

SAMUEL

My God. What has happened to Noah? Moses, go to my surgery and get me some bandages and some gin in the cabinet. Daniel, boil some water and bring me some clean rags.



ZIPPORAH

My father began to minister to Shem Noah, who was unconscious. First, he listened to his heart and took his pulse.

SAMUEL

What a beating you have taken, my friend. Please Noah, wake up. I can't lose you now. Do you hear me Shem Noah?

ZIPPORAH

My brother Moses rushed back in with the bandages, and Daniel was right on his heels with rags and water.

SAMUEL

How did this happen?

DANIEL

Papa, we were just minding our own business in a pub, and then they refused to serve us. We probably should have just left, but we didn't, and that's when a fight broke out.

ZIPPORAH

My father began washing Shem Noah's wounds.

SAMUEL

This is what you call minding your own business?

MOSES

Papa, we didn't start it...

SAMUEL

I don't care who started it. You almost got Noah killed. Don't say another word to me right now. I'm too angry to hear any of your excuses. Help me lift him into his bed down the hall.

SFX: Lifting him and carrying him down the hall and placing him into his bed.

DANIEL

Papa, I...

SAMUEL

...bring me the bandages, the basin of water, and leave us be. There will be time to talk later.

SFX: transition

ZIPPORAH

For the next few days, my father ministered to Shem Noah. He lingered at the edge of death.

BENJAMIN

So he survived?

ZIPPORAH

Yes, but it took weeks of nursing him back to life. I don't believe he was ever the same after what happened that night. He rarely ever went out alone and stuck close to my father. And my brothers, things were never quite the same with them either.

BENJAMIN

Did they ever find work again?

ZIPPORAH

Yes. But nothing to their satisfaction.

BENJAMIN

And what happened with your mother?

ZIPPORAH

She recovered, at least physically. But things with her were never quite the same either. I remember a time a few years later when we were all dressed up for Shabbat services and came to get Mother to join us. We were surprised to find her dressed in her everyday clothes.

SFX: musical transtion

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

Mamae, are you not coming to Shabbat services with Papa, Ester, and me?

REBEKAH

No, you three go.

ZIPPORAH

Mamae, it's been weeks since you joined us.

REBEKAH

It's enough that I light candles on Friday night and say the prayers. Besides, I can't understand a word they're saying, so what's the point of sitting there for over two hours watching the men? Are the boys going?

ESTER

No Mamae, what difference does it make what Moses and Daniel do? It means so much to Papa when we're there.

REBEKAH

You know, I used to love attending Catholic mass with your Papa. We'd sit in the back where no one could see us and hold hands. But here, I'm banished to the balcony. Plus, I get no pleasure or solace from the liturgy. At least in Portugal, I could receive communion with the men. And I could understand the Latin prayers. It felt like I mattered. Here...not so much.

ZIPPORAH

It's just different customs, Mamae. It takes time.

REBEKAH

It's been over three years. That's plenty of time. And nothing has changed, at least for me. But I'm glad you're going for Papa. Now, leave me to my knitting.

ESTER

You know, Mamae, knitting is prohibited on Shabbat.

REBEKAH

Yes, I am well aware, but I have been knitting for over fifty years on the Sabbath, and God has yet to strike me down. So, I will continue to knit. Now go. You can say a prayer for my soul.

(MORE)

## REBEKAH (CONT'D)

Just leave me in peace. And tell  
Papa I just needed to rest.

SFX: Musical transition to Synagogue

## ZIPPORAH

That Saturday at Bevis Marks  
Synagogue, services were not well  
attended, and many of the back pews  
were empty of congregants praying,  
except for my father. I looked down  
from the balcony as he stood there  
with the prayer shawl wrapped  
around his head and body, swaying  
back and forth in rhythm with the  
prayers. When the services  
concluded, he looked up at us as he  
took off his tallis. Tears were  
streaming down his face.

END

(CONT'D)

## ANNOUNCER

This is the conclusion of Episode  
six (ten) of Flames of Freedom.  
Written by Richard Stone. Produced  
and directed by Mark Simon at Cue  
Tone Productions. Audio  
Engineering, Original Music, and  
Sound Design by David Wilson.  
Executive Producer Lance Toland.

Special thanks to our ensemble  
cast...Zipporah played by Angelines  
Santana. Benjamin played by Jamie  
Treselyan. Diogo Nunes played by  
Juan Pablo Gamboa. Gracia Nunes  
played by Gabriela Lopetegui. James  
Oglethorpe played by Ian Russell.  
Additional roles played by Brad  
Davidorf, Barry Stoltze, Francois  
Clemenceau, and Roxanne Rittman.

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invaluable.

(MORE)

## ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

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