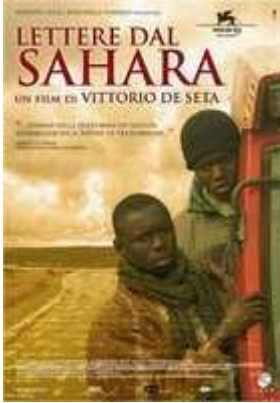


## Letters from The Sahara



### **Technical information about the film**

Title: Letters from The Sahara  
original title: Lettere Dal Sahara  
Year: 2006

Produced in: Italy

Language:  
Director: Vittorio de Seta  
screenplay: Vittorio de Seta  
editing: Marzia Mete  
cinematography: Antonio Grambone  
music: Fabio Tronco  
Length: 123 Minutes

cast: Djbril Kebe, Paola Ajmone Rondo, Stefano Saccotelli,  
Madawass Kebe, Fifi Cisse, Tihierno Ndiaye, Luca Barbeni

Awards:

- INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL FILM FESTIVAL 2007: Challenging the Years
- JERUSALEM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2007: The Spirit Of Freedom
- MAR DEL PLATA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2007: Focus Italy
- CAPE TOWN WORLD CINEMA FESTIVAL 2006: An Other World
- LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2006: Out of Competition - Special Event: Arcobaleno Latino Award
- SÃO PAULO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006: "Humanidade" Award to Vittorio de Seta
- RENCONTRES DE MONOSQUE 2007: Panorama
- N.I.C.E. Amsterdam 2007

- FESTIVAL VUE D'AFRIQUE DE MONTREAL 2007: International Competition
- KINO OTOK FESTIVAL 2007: Panorama
- MICEC Barcelona 2007: Panorama
- MIDNIGHT FILM FESTIVAL 2007: Panorama
- ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL 2007
- ANNECY CINEMA ITALIEN 2007: Panorama

**Plot Summary:**

Assane, a young Senegalese Muslim, interrupts his studies and emigrates to Italy following the death of his father. During his clandestine journey in Italy, Assane has to face with the problem of racism, religion, drug and work. In Turin, where he knows no one, Assane deals with the harsh challenges of living clandestinely but strengthened by his faith and the encouraging letters from an elderly teacher of his country, he studies Italian and finds a steady job. Caterina his Italian teacher, hires him as a 'carer' for her disabled brother Luca, so that Assane can get his permit to stay. Just when things seem to be going better, Assane is beaten up by a gang of hooligans, is seriously traumatized and cannot bear to stay in Italy. He returns home and, frustrated by not having lived up to his family's expectations, goes through a long crisis. Finally he seeks out his elderly teacher who has retired to a village in the South, and the old man succeeds in restoring his trust, identity and hope

## Letters from The Sahara - Italian Partners

### **THE PEDAGOGICAL SHEET**

#### **“LETTERS FROM THE SAHARA” BY VITTORIO DE SETA**

- 1) What are the settings in place in the film?
- 2) What are the most representative scenes?
- 3) What are the main topics dealt in the film?
- 4) According to you who are the positive and negative characters and why?
- 5) What is the main message of the film?
- 6) What do you mean for racial integration?
- 7) What is your personal opinion of the film?

- 1) What are the settings in place in this film?

The film shows several settings owing to the several shifts of the African protagonist, Assane, in search of a work from the South to the North of Italy, from Lampedusa, Porto Empedocle, Agrigento in Sicily to Villa Literno near Naples to Florence, Prato, Turin and his coming back to Senegal.

- 2) What are the most representative scenes?

- Assane's arrival in Lampedusa after a terrible and painful travel where he had seen the death of his closest friend and children, women and men thrown down and drowned into the Mediterranean sea by some African criminals.
- Assane's decision to leave his top model cousin because he did not share her modern European way of life.
- When Assane is mugged by a violent xenophobic gang of Italian criminals who bring him to the brink of death.
- The beautiful message from Assane's teacher.

- 3) What are the main topics dealt in the film?

- The racial and religious intolerance vs foreigners strictly connected to the problem of immigration ;
- but there is also the hope for a cultural integration underlined by a sense of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity among people belonging to different cultures and religions.

- 4) According to you who are the positive and negative characters in the film and why?

- Among the positive characters firstly there is Assane, who is the symbol of hopeful migrants when they leave their countries to look for improving their life quality condition.
- Luca ( the Italian teacher's brother) who is capable of making an introspective process of acceptance of “ someone different” and having a psychological and emotional

growth.

- Salimata (Assane's cousin) who managed to reconcile her beliefs and African customs with a new modern life style, an example of integration and intercultural process.
- Assane's teacher who succeeds in giving comfort to a disappointed, confused Assane when he comes back to Senegal after being mugged by the Italian criminal gang.
- The negative characters are of course all people suffering from xenophobia and European and non who exploit poor immigrants' miseries.

5) What is the main message of the film?

- The acceptance of the Diversity, of the different cultures and the rejection of any form of racial discrimination.

6) What do you mean for racial integration?

- Integration does not mean rejection of our own origins but a way to enrich our minds with new experiences of life and to be able to pass them on our people : that was Assane's teacher main message.

7) What is your personal opinion about the film?

- The film deals with a serious actual problem: the migration and the problems connected to it , Diversity and Equality. It mirrors all kinds of pains , sufferings , exploitations of people coming abroad to live in a foreign country as Italy together with episodes of intolerance and prejudices not only from the host people but among them too. Their miserable life is very similar to our emigrants' life in America and in European countries last century because poverty, misery, racial and religious persecutions have no colour, no time : it is the same everywhere and everytime until we do not understand that a multicultural society may be a form of great enrichment for everybody at one condition that there is a mutual respect and tolerance one to another.