

**Learning by Ear - Literacy****“A Girl Finishing School”****Episode 02:** *Who’s Going to Pay for Latifa's Education?***Author:** Frédéric GAKPARA**Editor:** Yann Durand**Translator:** Anne Thomas

**Characters:**     **Latifa** (*15 years old, Papa Wali and Mamoua’s daughter. In her ninth year of school. Very intelligent, has never had to retake a year. However, she has to face her parents’ decision to make her drop out of school just as she is preparing for her exams.*)

**Zakia** (*20 years old, a very emancipated girl, Latifa's friend, has just found a job in a tourist agency thanks to her technical qualifications. She travels a lot and meets lots of people in her job.*)

**Elinam** (*19 years old, Papa Wali and Mamoua's son, Latifa's older brother. He has just started university in a big city 120 kilometers away from his parents' small town.*)

**Papa Wali** (*52-year-old father of three – his eldest son is Elinam, then comes his daughter Latifa, and then another son, Souleyman. He runs a metal workshop but he is illiterate and his business is doing less and less well because he cannot adapt to new technologies and is faced with new competition.*)

**Mamoua** (*39 years old, Papa Wali’s wife and the mother of his children. She is expecting a fourth child. She is an illiterate housewife and runs a small maize porridge business in front of her house.*)

**INTRO:**

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear for the second episode in our series "A Girl Finishing School" about illiteracy and education.

Latifa is the daughter of Papa Wali and Mamoua. The 15-year-old is in her ninth year of school. She is very intelligent and has never had to retake a year. However, she now has to battle with her parents' decision to make her drop out of school because they can't afford the fees. Since her mother told her this, she has been moving heaven and earth to find someone to intervene on her behalf. She has come to see her best friend, Zakia to tell her about her problems. Zakia is an outgoing young woman in her early 20's who is very enterprising and works in a big tourist agency. So, let's listen to the second episode: **Who's going to Pay for Latifa's Education?**

**Scene 1, IN ZAKIA'S ROOM**

Zakia and Latifa

**1. SFX ATMO: BACKGROUND SOUND OF MUSIC CHANNEL ON TV**

**2. Zakia:** **(Indignantly)** And what did you say, Latifa?

**3. Latifa:** **(Very downtrodden, after a moment's silence)** That I was going to continue my studies and I didn't want to end up like her. Oh, Zakia!

- 4. Zakia:** Really! Wow! That's the way to talk Latifa! What is your mum thinking? What girl these days wouldn't want to work in a big company, be independent and make her own living?
- 5. Latifa:** My mum is old school. I mean she only started selling porridge outside the house in the first place, because I made her!
- 6. Zakia:** It was easier to ask your dad to pay for everything, even for her own personal things. How old-fashioned!! How did the discussion end?
- 7. Latifa:** She told me I could sell my clothes to pay my school fees if I wanted to. So I left and she complained that I was being rude.
- 8. Zakia:** You're joking! Don't give up Latifa! What does your dad say about all this?
- 9. Latifa:** It's as if he had no idea, Zakia. He didn't dare look at me when he left and he pretended that he was in a hurry.
- 10. Zakia:** Do you think it's his decision?
- 11. Latifa:** (**Hesitatingly**) I don't know... I don't think so... Ever since his business started to go downhill he's had to bow down to my mum who's throwing her weight around, now that her porridge business is doing so well.

- 12. Zakia:** And what about talking to your brother? Maybe he'd be on your side. I mean, **you** have to leave school so that **he** can continue his studies. How unfair this world is! (**A moment of silence**)
- (**Latifa whimpers. She can't hold back her tears. There is emotional music on TV.**)
- 13. Latifa:** (**Bursts into tears....**) What am I going to do?
- 14. Zakia:** Are you crying? What are you doing, Latifa? This is the time to be strong, please. (**In a tender voice**) Look at me. Everyone has difficulties sometimes. That's life. But it's important never to give up.
- 15. Latifa:** (**Whimpering**) I've always really tried not to disappoint my parents. I do everything I can so they don't have any unnecessary expenses, Zakia (**tears**).
- 16. Zakia:** I know what you must be feeling right now. You're disappointed and lonely and you feel let down... I can help you pay your fees. But if your parents don't agree, there will be trouble...
- 17. Latifa:** (**Calmer**) Thanks for your help. But you're right to be careful. My mum has never really warmed to you, and you helping me could just make things worse.

- 18. Zakia:** Your mum! (**Imitating Latifa's mother**) “God forbid me from giving a name like Zakia to my daughter. What a shameless hussy! ZAKIA! (**Swearing**) Tsss!!! Of all the girls in the neighborhood you had to choose her as your friend! What kind of girl dresses like that? She looks practically naked all the time. Does she know how to cook at least?” (**Bursts into laughter**)
- 19. Latifa:** (**Laughing**) Now you really do sound like her! (**Laughing again, then silence**)
- 20. Zakia:** Let's not stick around here moping all day. Let's call your brother. Give me his number!
- 21. Latifa:** It's in my diary I think...
- 22.SFX ATMO:** **Opens her bag and looks for her diary, leafs through it.**
- 23.Latifa:** Here it is...
- 24. Zakia:** Great! Can you turn off the TV?
- 25. SFX ATMO:** **TV is turned off**

**Scene 2, IN ZAKIA'S ROOM**

Zakia, Latifa and Elinam (on the telephone)

**26. SFX ATMO:** sound of mobile phone keypad and ringing.

**27. Zakia:** It's ringing! Here you are. You talk to him. Just explain everything calmly.

**28. Elinam:** Hello!

**29. Latifa:** Hello Elinam, it's Latifa.

**30. Elinam:** Hi Latifa, how are you?

**31. Latifa:** I'm fine.

**32. Zakia:** (**Whispering to Latifa**) What do you mean you're fine? Tell him you're not fine at all.

**33. Elinam:** Where are you?

**34. Latifa:** At Zakia's, my friend's. I'm calling from her mobile.

**35. Elinam:** Is everyone OK?

**36. Latifa:** Yes, but I was sent home from school yesterday because the fees hadn't been paid and Mom says I have to drop out.

- 37. Elinam:** What? Why?
- 38. Latifa:** Because neither she nor Dad can afford to pay the fees.
- 39. Elinam:** What are you talking about?
- 40. Latifa:** This morning Mom woke me up and told me dad needed the money to pay your rent.
- 41. Elinam:** What? My rent?
- 42. Latifa:** Yes.
- 43. Elinam:** That's not a real problem! He hasn't sent me any money for three months but I'm still managing. What did you say to her?
- 44. Latifa:** I said I wouldn't drop out of school for anything. So Mom told me to go and sell my clothes to pay my fees.
- 45. Elinam:** **(Ironically)** Well, that's a good idea!  
**(Laughing)**
- 46. Latifa:** Do you really think that?
- 47. Elinam:** No, I'm joking!
- 48. Latifa:** Can't you call them and make them change their minds, please?

- 49. Elinam:** I'll call them tomorrow. I don't have enough credit now.
- 50. Latifa:** Wait, Zakia would like to talk to you.
- 51. Elinam:** OK, put her on.
- 52. Zakia:** Hi Elinam.
- 53. Elinam:** Hi Zakia, how are you?
- 54. Zakia:** Not good. Latifa won't stop crying. Please. You have to help her. I can find the money to pay her fees but you'll have to pretend it's yours.
- 55. Elinam:** Thanks for your help, Zakia. You are a true friend. I'm trying to get a grant. If I manage, things will be better.
- 56. Zakia:** Don't worry, you'll get the grant – you deserve it!
- 57. Elinam:** Thank you! I'll call my parents tomorrow and let you know what happens.
- 58. Zakia:** All right! Speak to you tomorrow then!
- 59. Elinam:** OK. Bye, Zakia!
- 60. Zakia:** Bye, Elinam! (**Switches off the phone**)  
Great! I'm sure things are going to work out, Latifa!

- 61. Latifa:** (cautious) Do you think so? Really?
- 62. Zakia:** Come on, let's get some fresh air. And then I'll drop you off back at home.
- 63. SFX:** **Noise of chairs being pushed in, the steps of the two girls, the door being locked.**
- 64. ATMO:** **TOWN. TRAFFIC.**
- 65. Latifa:** Where are we going, Zakia?
- 66. Zakia:** Let's go into town for a bit?
- 67. Latifa:** But I have to be back in an hour.
- 68. Zakia:** Don't worry, we'll manage.
- 69. SFX:** **MOPED BEING STARTED**

## MUSIC

**Scene 3, AT PAPA WALI'S HOME**

Papa Wali, Mamoua, Latifa and Elinam (on the telephone)

- 70. ATMO:**           **HENS IN THE YARD, SHEEP IN THE DISTANCE,  
LITTLE TRAFFIC, SOUNDS OF POTS AND PANS,  
CHILDREN SHOUTING**
- 71. Mamoua:**       The porridge is hot! Mama Mamoua is out already! Hot  
porridge for sale.(Mamoua's shouts go on)
- 72. SFX:**           **MOBILE PHONE RINGS FOR A LONG TIME.  
FOOTSTEPS AND SOUND OF OBJECTS BEING  
MOVED**
- 73. Papa Wali:**    Where did I leave my mobile? (Silence. He calls his daughter)  
Latifa!
- 74. Latifa:**        (From afar) Yes, Dad!
- 75. Papa Wali:**    My mobile is ringing. Where is it?
- 76. Latifa:**        (From afar) You left it by the sink.
- 77. Papa Wali:**    Poor me!
- 78. SFX:**           **Fast steps. PHONE RINGS STOPS AS HE ANSWERS**

**79. Papa Wali:** Hello!

**80. Elinam:** Hello, Dad! It's me, Elinam.

**81. Papa Wali:** Hello Elinam! How are you?

**82. Elinam:** Not bad, Dad! How is everything at home?

**83. Papa Wali:** Everything's fine. I'm sorry not to have sent you any money lately. Your landlord must be starting to make threats.

**84. Elinam:** I'm trying to manage, dad. But that's not why I called. I'm calling about Latifa. Apparently, she got sent home from school.

**85. Papa Wali:** Yes, but we've found a solution for her.

**86. Elinam:** And, what is it?

**87. Papa Wali:** She's going to stop her studies to help your mother with her business.

**88. Elinam:** But she's only 15. She has to take her exams this year!

**89. Papa Wali:** Well, as I haven't been able to send you anything for your rent or your other expenses, you can imagine that Latifa is not my top priority at the moment, can't you?

- 90. Elinam:** Dad, you can't sacrifice her for our problems! Anyway, I'm doing what I can to cope on campus.
- 91. Papa Wali:** Elinam, you're not going to start begging so you can stay at university, are you? What do you mean by *cope*?
- 92. Elinam:** Dad, I am not begging. But I would be ready to beg for my sister.
- 93. Papa Wali:** Your mother is pregnant. She can't get up early in the morning to make her porridge. Latifa has to help her because I can't afford to pay anyone else.
- 94. Elinam:** Can you put Mom on please?
- 95. Papa Wali:** OK! **(He calls his daughter)** Latifa!
- 96. Latifa:** Dad?
- 97. Papa Wali:** Take the phone to your mother. It's your brother. He wants to talk to her. **(To Elinam)** Hang on!
- 98. SFX ATMO:** **Fast steps of young girl. Sounds of a calm road.**
- 99. Latifa:** Mom, Elinam wants to talk to you.
- 100. Mamoua:** Eh! Eh! Eh! My son! What a lovely day! **(In the phone)** Hello!
- 101. Elinam:** Hello Mom! How are you doing?

- 102. Mamoua:** I'm well, apart from feeling tired. What about you? There's nothing wrong, is there?
- 103. Elinam:** No Mom. I'm calling about Latifa. I don't want her to have to give up school. Dad has put forward all sorts of reasons but none of them convinced me. The bottom line is that she has to go back to school!
- 104. Manoua:** Elinam, your father is going through a hard time. Do you know they're going to cut off the electricity in his workshop soon? And no electricity means no shop!
- 105. Elinam:** Dad says it's because of you and you say it's because of him. But who will it really benefit if Latifa drops out of school?
- 106. Mamoua:** Elinam!
- 107. Elinam:** Mom, I'm running out of credit. I have to go now. Tell Dad I'll write to him. But you know what I think. Bye Mom!
- 108. Mamoua:** Elinam? Are you angry? (**No answer**) Oh, he's hung up already! (**Alone**) For it to come to this! I just want to make things better, not to argue with my son...

**MUSIC**

## OUTRO

Will Elinam find enough money to make his parents back down? Will he really be able to save his sister Latifa's education? What will Elinam's letter say? Find out in the next episode of "A Girl Finishing School", a series about illiteracy and education by Frédéric Gakpara.

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**Thanks for your listening and all the best till next time!**

**END OF 2<sup>nd</sup> EPISODE**