

Learning by Ear - Literacy**“A GIRL FINISHING SCHOOL”****Episode 05:** *"Success or not..."***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.*)

Teacher (*36-year-old man, teacher at Latifa's school, very attached to her because of her intelligence and good results*)

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.*)

Epiphane (*18-year-old boy, employed by Papa Wali. Very intelligent but illiterate because he never had the chance to go to school. The more problems his handicap causes him, the stronger his desire to learn.*)

INTRO

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

Ever since Latifa returned to school, the atmosphere in Papa Wali's home has been tense. There is hardly any communication and little attention paid to the 15-year-old (Latifa). The situation has been exacerbated by her mother's problems at the micro-finance agency for being behind in her payments. Since then, Mamoua is extremely irritable. And Papa Wali is spending less and less time at home.

*After classes, Latifa is kept back by her main teacher for a brief talk. Join us and listen in to the fifth episode entitled: **Success or not...***

Scene 1, AT LATIFA'S SCHOOL

Latifa and the teacher

1. ATMO: NOISE OF SCHOOLYARD – TRAFFIC

2. Teacher: I don't know what's going on, Latifa. Your marks have got a lot worse.

3. Latifa: (Silence) ...

4. Teacher: Don't you have anything to say?

5. **Latifa:** (Silence) ...
6. **Teacher:** My colleagues have told me that you're always evasive and that's what I've noticed in my classes too. There must be an explanation!
7. **Latifa:** (Silence) ...
8. **Teacher:** Are you in love with a boy?
9. **Latifa:** No, Sir!!!
10. **Teacher:** So, what's the reason?
11. **Latifa:** I don't know, Sir... (**Brief silence**) I can't concentrate when I'm doing my homework.
12. **Teacher:** What's stopping you from concentrating?
13. **Latifa:** (**Silence.**) The atmosphere isn't good at home, Sir. My parents barely speak to me. I think I was wrong to go against their decision to take me out of the school.
14. **Teacher:** Do you really think that? What would become of you if you had accepted their decision?

- 15. Latifa:** They've got serious financial problems, Sir and I'm just thinking about my studies. I've been selfish. (**On the verge on tears**).
- 16. Teacher:** Latifa, what you're doing is not selfish. You did exactly the right thing.
- 17. Latifa:** If I hadn't been selfish I would have given the money for the school fees to my dad so he could solve his problems...
- 18. Teacher:** Your schooling **is** one of his problems. It's even the most important problem that he has.
- 19. Latifa:** So why isn't he talking to me anymore? You don't understand, Sir! They look at me as if it's all my fault. I am the source of the problems at home...
- 20. Teacher:** Latifa, I promise you that you're not. Either your father regrets his decision and is annoyed with himself or he's so absorbed with his own problems and angry that he isn't managing his business better. But whatever the case, you're not to blame.
- 21. Latifa:** Well, whatever it is, I'm not helping matters!
- 22. Teacher:** Latifa, your father's problems could be solved from one day to the next. But if you mess up your education today, you won't be able to catch up later.

23. Latifa: But I can't concentrate at home where everyone seems to be in mourning; and my mom can't even go one day without insulting my best friend, who is actually the one paying for my education!

24. Teacher: You'll have to use good humor as a strategy. Even if no one is smiling, you should try to always be in a good mood. Without school, you've got three options, Latifa: either you'll be fortunate enough to get a job in a flourishing company or you might even get lucky in marriage, or you'll end up miserable in some corner, and that would be a real shame.

An education will significantly improve your chances of finding social, moral and psychological stability. Even if you encounter material poverty, you will have a psychological force in many situations. Do you know what I'm getting at?

25. Latifa: Yes, Sir!

26. Teacher: As a girl, Latifa, school is your best option. A woman's physical beauty can no longer guarantee her a future these days. So, get a grip of yourself. The exams are only one month away and any mistakes and hesitation will only be harmful. Do you understand?

27. Latifa: I understand, Sir!

28. **Teacher:** So, get to work! I want you to be more attentive, Latifa!
29. **Latifa:** **(Smiling)** OK Sir! You can count on me!
30. **Teacher:** **(Smiling)** Great. Have a good lunch then!
31. **Latifa:** You too, Sir! See you tomorrow!
32. **Teacher:** Yes, see you tomorrow!

MUSIC

33. **NARRATOR:** *So our pupil has been cheered up and is ready to face the challenges of her studies again. The next day, Zakia, Latifa’s friend invites Epiphane, Papa Wali’s employee for lunch in her canteen to find out how his literacy classes are going. He’s been going to them for almost three weeks now.*

Scene 2, AT THE CANTEEN IN ZAKIA'S AGENCY

Zakia and Epiphane

34. **ATMO:** **CANTEEN NOISE – BLURRED CONVERSATIONS
– SOUND OF CUTLERY**
35. **Zakia:** So, Epiphane, do you like the atmosphere at the evening class?

- 36. Epiphane:** Yes, Zakia, I do! It's really relaxed. Everybody goes at their own pace. They take time to explain to us nicely and patiently. It's really good.
- 37. Zakia:** And what's the most important thing you've learned so far?
- 38. Epiphane:** Well... I know how to write my name now...
- 39. Zakia:** Oh, really? That's great!
- 40. Epiphane:** I also know how to sign...
- 41. Zakia:** Didn't you have a signature before?
- 42. Epiphane:** (A bit embarrassed) Er ... no big sister... I couldn't sign...
- 43. Zakia:** That's nothing to be ashamed of, Epiphane. You're now taking responsibility and catching up on lost time.
- 44. Epiphane:** Thank you. Without you I would never have had the chance.
- 45. Zakia:** You should thank Mr and Mrs Hendrik. It's their project after all. I was just showing them around as part of my job. How's Papa Wali doing?

- 46. Epiphane:** He's fine.
- 47. Zakia:** Is he still against signing up for evening classes?
- 48. Epiphane:** My boss? He doesn't listen to anyone. He just worries about money.
- 49. Zakia:** But he is now using the equipment the Hendrik Foundation gave him, isn't he?
- 50. Epiphane:** Well... you mean, he's put it in the cupboard! He keeps saying he's been doing his job for over 30 years and the ultraviolet rays aren't going to kill him now.
- 51. Zakia:** **(She shouts to the waiter)** I'd like to pay please!
(To Epiphane) That man doesn't understand anything! And yet I took Mr and Mrs Hendrik to your workshop in order to help him solve his problems.
- 52. Epiphane:** Well, I'm wearing everything for sure, big sister! The gloves, the mask, the leather gear... Everything!
- 53. Zakia:** That's very good, Epiphane! Your situation is going to improve considerably if you carry on like this.
- 54. Epiphane:** Thank you! I won't let you down.

55. SFX: **SOUND OF COINS BEING COUNTED AND PUT ON THE TABLE**

56. Zakia: OK, I have my change so we can go. I've got a pile of work waiting for me!

57. SFX: NOISE OF CHAIRS

58. Epiphane: Thanks again, big sister!

59. Zakia: It's nothing, Epiphane! Bye for now!

60. Epiphane: Good bye!

61. SFX: **STEPS GOING AWAY**

MUSIC

62. NARRATOR: *During the next few days, Zakia put all her efforts into cheering up her best friend before the exams. She also brought Mr and Mrs Hendrik back to Papa Wali's workshop to buy the forged iron furniture to help kick-start the business again and cheer Papa Wali up so his bad mood would stop ruining Latifa's life. Now, the exams are finally over and Latifa, who passed them with flying colors, is in a party mood at Zakia's house!*

Scene 3, IN ZAKIA'S BEDROOM

Zakia and Latifa

63. ATMO: LOUD POP MUSIC – SOUND OF GLASSES, VOICES

64. Latifa: **(Laughing)** Wow, Zakia! It's making me giddy!

65. Zakia: **(Laughing)** What, Latifa? The light or the cocktail?

66. Latifa: What do you mean, the cocktail? There's no alcohol in it!
It must be the lights!

67. Zakia: How about going to a nightclub?

68. Latifa: I've never been to one before!

69. Zakia: I know you haven't. Let's go tonight! We should
celebrate your victory. You deserve to let yourself go
after all the months of stress and worry, don't you?

70. Latifa: Yes, but it would be too much for me. We can dance
here.

71. Zakia: It's not the same!

72. **Latifa:** I'll make do with this for the moment, Zakia. You're already 20 and you work. And your parents trust you. You're the exact opposite of me!
73. **Zakia:** Don't worry about it!
74. **SFX:** **GLASSES BEING REFILLED**
75. **Latifa:** **(Laughing)** That's enough, thanks, Zakia!
76. **Zakia:** I'm so glad that you passed the exams.
77. **Latifa:** It was really hard!
78. **Zakia:** I know and that's why this victory is such a great one. Come on, Latifa, let's raise our glasses again. **(Shouting)** Victory is ours!
79. **SFX:** **GLASSES CLINKING TOGETHER**
80. **Latifa:** Victory is ours! Cheers!
81. **SFX:** **MOBILE PHONE RINGING**

- 82. Zakia:** (**Very happy**) It must be your brother! I'm sure! (**She answers**) Hello, Elinam? (...) (**Angrily**) Who gave you this number? (...) What are you saying? (...) Don't you ever ring this number again! I don't want to go out with you – not today, not tomorrow, never. Stop hassling me or I'll call the police! (**Hangs up**) What a pain!
- 83. Latifa:** Hey! Zak! Who was it?
- 84. Zakia:** A mental case! This guy keeps hassling me outside the agency and when I say no, do you know what he says? "*Not only whites have got money.*"
- 85. Latifa:** Oh, because he saw you with foreign tourists?
- 86. Zakia:** Exactly! That's what these guys think of me. They think that I myself am a tourist product to make the agency tourists stay longer.
- 87. Latifa:** This is a part of your job that I don't envy at all.
- 88. Zakia:** It's like that everywhere, Latifa. As soon as a woman does well, men think it's only thanks to her body. I don't want to be dependent on any man. I want to assert myself using my own abilities and I will keep training so I can advance in my job.

89. Latifa: You're right Zak! We have to study, train, and make space for ourselves in the sun. But let's not think about it now! We don't want to ruin our celebration! Let's dance!

(They turn up the music, tease each other, shout and sing ...)

OUTRO:

The two friends dance until late in the night. Strangely enough, Papa Wali and Mamoua are not angry about their daughter coming home so late. What's more, Mamoua even says good night to the unpopular Zakia who brings Latifa home. So, the holidays start off miraculously well for Latifa and Zakia. But how long will the truce last? Have peace and harmony really come back to the house? To find out, tune in to the next episode of "A Girl Finishing School", a series about illiteracy and education by Frédéric Gakpara.

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Thanks for your loyalty and all the best till next time!

END OF 5th EPISODE