

**Learning by Ear - Literacy****“A GIRL FINISHING SCHOOL”****Episode 01:** “A Tough Day”**Author:** Frédéric GAKPARA**Editor:** Yann Durand**Translator:** Anne Thomas

**Characters:** **PAPA WALI** (*52-year-old father of three – the oldest son is Elinam, then comes the daughter, Latifa, and another son Jaurès. 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.*)

**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 is his desire to learn.*)

**MR TÔ** (*38 years old. Educated and demanding man, one of Papa Wali’s customers.*)

**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.*)

**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.*)

## INTRO

**Hello and welcome to a new Learning by Ear series called "A Girl Finishing School", which is about illiteracy and education. We are going to follow the adventures of the siblings Latifa and Elinam, their family and friends over the course of the next 10 episodes.**

*Papa Wali is a 52-year-old father of three and the head of a metal workshop in a small town. He is illiterate and is finding it increasingly difficult to keep his business running profitably because of younger competitors who have a better understanding of new technologies. For some time now his order book has been empty. Also, his household is suffering from the bad sales. Papa Wali has been neglecting his household, which is becoming poorer and poorer.*

*The atmosphere in the workshop is bad this morning. Papa Wali is worried about a high electricity bill. His employee, Epiphane, who is barely 18 and also illiterate, becomes the object of his frustration. This is the first episode of our series called: A Tough Day!*

**Scene 1, IN PAPA WALI’S WORKSHOP**

Papa Wali and Epiphane

- 1. ATMO:** **NOISE OF A WELDING MACHINE, HAMMERING ON A SHEET OF METAL.**
- 2. PAPA WALI:** (**Very angry**) I don’t understand why the electricity bill is so high. We only have a welding machine and a filing machine in this workshop. Epiphane! Either you’re using electricity behind my back or the electrical company is robbing me...
- 3. EPIPHANE:** (**Very surprised**) Oh, boss! Never! I’ve never used electricity behind your back...
- 4. PAPA WALI:** Is that all you can say? How do you explain why the electricity bill is so high when we barely have any customers? I might be illiterate but I’m not stupid!
- 5. EPIPHANE:** Boss, can’t we appeal?
- 6. PAPA WALI:** Who to? The thieves who run this country? They’re the ones who make laws to suit them and they’re always right. Those of us who can’t read or write are totally at their mercy.
- 7. EPIPHANE:** That’s true boss. If I’d have gone to school I’d give them a piece of my mind...

**8. PAPA WALI:** Shut up! Anyway, how come you didn't go to school, Epiphane? When **we** were growing up we didn't have a choice because the only school was a long way away. But that's not true in your case.

**9. EPIPHANE:** Boss, you know that I never even met my parents and there was nobody to send me to school.

**10. PAPA WALI:** Well, you should be happy: at least you have a job! There are some people who went to school but still became nobodies.

**11. SFX:** **NOISE OF A CAR ARRIVING AND PARKING IN FRONT OF THE WORKSHOP.**

**12. EPIPHANE:** The lamp man is here, boss.

**13. PAPA WALI:** Get the lamps out!

**Scene 2, IN PAPA WALI'S WORKSHOP:**

Papa Wali, Epiphane and Mr Tô

**14. SFX ATMO:** **SOUND OF A GATE OPENING AND CLOSING. THE WELDING AND HAMMERING SOUNDS STOP. SOUND OF STEPS.**

**15. PAPA WALI: (Loudly to Mr Tô who is arriving) Welcome Mr Tô!**

**16. MR TÔ:** (Talking as he approaches) Thank you! How are you Papa Wali?

**17. PAPA WALI:** Thanks be to God, we are in good health. Here's your order, Mr. Tô.

**18. SFX:** **SOUND OF SEVERAL GARDEN LAMPS BEING DRAGGED ON THE FLOOR**

**19. MR TÔ:** Don't tell me these are my lamps!

**20. PAPA WALI:** Is there a problem, Mr Tô?

**21. MR TÔ:** A problem? You must be joking! Can you imagine these in my garden?

**22. PAPA WALI:** Oh Mr Tô, but these are what you ordered, aren't they? ...

**23. MR TÔ:** What? These warped and twisted asymmetrical bars? I showed you prototypes made by my cousin, didn't I? Are **THESE** what I showed you? (Pause, annoyed) I should have placed my order with the guy who made them for him! How can an old hand like you have messed it up so badly?

**24. PAPA WALI:** The problem is that we do everything by hand, Sir. You can't compare our work to that of machines...

**25. MR TÔ:** How come you don't have the same equipment as other metalworkers? (**scornfully**) We're not in the Stone Age anymore you know!

**26. PAPA WALI:** Machines are expensive and I can barely pay my employee...

**27. MR TÔ:** But that would make more sense than making rubbish like this! (**Talking as he moves towards his car**) Anyway, you can keep your lamps, I'll order mine somewhere else...

**28. SFX:** **LAMPS BEING MOVED APART. SOUND OF STEPS GOING AWAY**

**29. PAPA WALI:** (**Calls Mr Tô**) Mr Tô, come back! I'll rectify the problems. You're not going to leave me with eight lamps are you?

**30. M. TÔ:** (**From a distance**) Yes, I am! Put them in your family's fields if you feel like it! I'm not taking them, that's for sure...

**31. SFX:** **SOUND OF GATE OPENING AND CLOSING. CAR STARTS UP.**

**32. PAPA WALI: (Feeling humiliated and very angry)** Oh!! Is it the fact that they can read that makes these people look down on others, or is it only money? You come and place orders for a low price and get discount after discount and now all of a sudden today you dare talk to me like that! People are out of order in this country! Just because we have machines today, you're going to complain about my work? Well, go ahead! Go to the people who have big machines. One day, you'll find out that WE'RE the ones who started this profession in this country. Ungrateful beggars! (**To Epiphanie**) What's your problem, Epiphanie? Are you just going to keep staring at me?

**33. EPIPHANE:** No, boss!

**34. PAPA WALI:** Then, get rid of these lamps! I want them out of my sight!

**35. SFX:** **SOUND OF STEPS AND THE LAMP BARS BEING PUT SOMEWHERE, SIMULTANEOUS FILING NOISE...**

**36. NARRATOR:** *That night in bed, Papa Wali can't get to sleep. The fact that he barely ate anything at dinner has worried his wife, Mamouda.*

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

Papa Wali and Mamoua

**37. ATMO:** CRICKETS, NIGHTBIRDS IN THE BACKGROUND,  
SOUND OF BEDSPRINGS /TURNING IN ONE'S BED

**38. MAMOUA:** Wali, why don't you tell me what's wrong!

**39. PAPA WALI:** (moans)

**40. MAMOUA:** Can you imagine what it feels like for a wife when her husband is moping around in their shared bed and she has no idea what's going on?

**41. PAPA WALI:** I'm sorry, Mamoua... Everything's happening all at once... Debts, losing customers, higher bills... This morning, a customer insulted me and didn't take what he had ordered because he said it was badly made. And tonight, Latifa was waiting for me here after being sent home from school because the fees hadn't been paid... and her big brother is months behind on his rent and I can't let that happen if I don't want him sleeping rough, so he can go to university... (**Silence**)

**42. MAMOUA:** (**Sighs**) Oh Wali! It's tough everywhere, isn't it? Everyone's complaining because everything is too expensive. But tell me how come you didn't get the orders right for the man? You would at least have been able to use the money to pay Elinam's rent.

**43. PAPA WALI:** He can't expect to get a perfect copy of the factory-made lamps that he showed me, can he? I am not a machine!

**44. MAMOUA:** You should have explained that to him from the start, shouldn't you?

**45. PAPA WALI:** What man would ever say he can't do something? You may as well kiss goodbye to the customer straight away.

**46. MAMOUA:** Yes, but now he's kissed goodbye to you without paying for your output. How are we going to pay our son's rent now? Latifa is not an issue. I think she should stop school anyway. What's the point in educating a girl who's going to end up in some man's kitchen?

**47. PAPA WALI:** I don't know... If that was the only problem.

**48. MAMOUA:** Wali, we have to start somewhere so it makes sense to solve the simplest problem first. And then we'll see about the rest over the next few days.

**49. PAPA WALI:** Maybe you're right. I have to calm down so that I can find the right way out.

**50. MAMOUA:** Exactly. And now try to get some sleep. Please.

**51. PAPA WALI:** Yes, my dear. Good night!

**52. ATMO:** **TURNING IN BED, RUSTLE OF CLOTHES, SOFT MUSIC + INSECTS + NIGHTBIRDS**

**53. NARRATOR:** *The next day, early in the morning when the cock has barely crowed, Mamoua wakes up her daughter Latifa to talk to her. Sitting on a tree trunk along the kitchen wall, Latifa listens to her mother and is confused.*

**Scene 4, AT PAPA WALI'S HOME:**

Mamoua and Latifa

**54. SFX ATMO:** **COCK CROWING, SOUND OF POTS AND PANS BEING WASHED AND PUT AWAY, YARD BEING SWEPT...**

**55. MAMOUA:** Listen carefully, Latifa. I am your mother. I only want what's best for your future. You know that your dad has got lots of problems at the moment and we have to help him solve them. Your education has become too expensive for him and I can't cover the costs with my porridge. You can read, you can write. What more can a girl want from school? You have to leave, my girl.

**56. LATIFA:** But Mom, I've got exams this year and I have to pass them to get my first school-leaving certificate. There are just six months left until the exams.

**57. MAMOUA:** Latifa, are **you** paying for school? I just said we can't afford it anymore. Your brother is at university and we can't even pay his rent. Do you want him to end up on the street instead of coming back highly qualified?

**58. LATIFA:** (**Pleading voice**) And **I'm** the one who has to leave school? What's the point in having gone at all if I don't even get the lowest of certificates even though I've never failed? (**Bursts into tears**) What about Jaurès who always has to retake the year? Why doesn't **he** have to leave school?

**59. MAMOUA:** You should help your little brother instead of talking like this about him. Jaurès is a boy and one day he'll have to make a living and set up a home. You're a girl. Whatever your qualifications, you're going to end up as a housewife. So long as some hooligan doesn't get you pregnant before...

**60. LATIFA:** (**Still in tears**) Why are you saying all these awful things to me, Mom? When did you ever see me with a boy? (**Very annoyed**) You're the one who thinks a woman is meant to depend on her husband, not me. I don't want to end up like you!

**61. MAMOUA:** Oh, really? What do you know?

**62. LATIFA:** (**Very firmly**) I know that I have to go back to school, so that I can work and cover my costs.

**63. MAMOUA:** (**Shouting**) Go back then! You can sell your clothes to pay for your schooling! (**Latifa goes off and her mother shouts after her**) So now you're going off? Look at what you've become, you girls of today. In our day, we didn't say a word when our parents were speaking. What do you learn at school? How to be impolite as well?

**64. SFX ATMO HENS + SHEEP + BIRDS**

**Music**

**OUTRO:**

*Latifa's future has just been dealt a sad blow. Will the intelligent girl end up staying at home? How will she manage to face her parents' pressure alone? Will Papa Wali and Mamoua manage to solve their problems? 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 listening and all the best till next time!

**END OF 1<sup>ST</sup> EPISODE**