

Heath – Episode 3 (sanitary facilities)
Author: Hope Azeda

Learning by Ear

Health - Episode 3 (sanitary facilities)

Author: Hope Azeda

Editor: Christine Harjes

Characters:

5 boys (Hassan, Simo, Steve, Jimmy, Manuel)

Landlady

Intro:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear's series on health. Today you'll hear how the five Mandela Hostel boys get into trouble with their landlady. It all starts when the landlady comes to chase them for the rent. Soon Simo, Steve, Hassan, Jimmy and Manuel start arguing with the landlady about the hostel's toilet and the bathroom. Listen to the program and find out what the whole trouble is about. You'll also hear what toilets have to do with health and how you can lessen your chances of falling sick.

SCENE ONE

Landlady, Hassan, Steve, Simo and Manuel at Mandela Hostel in the wee hours of the morning.

SFX: ***Sounds of birds and crickets; once in a while a cock crows. Footsteps of the landlady and garbage boy are heard. She walks with difficulty and does not breathe comfortably. She uses a stick to support herself, steps on cracking items (sometimes stones), a dog approaches her backing and she hits it with her walking stick, dog barks off screaming...she talks to herself.***

2. Landlady: ***(Off mic, mumbling to herself)*** I want to trap those boys so they will pay me my money. I will get them before they wake up, I will tell them to lie on their backs and will discipline them by beating them on their soft behinds like

any parent would do. They are silly kids, it is three months since they last paid me any money.

7. SFX: ***Knocking sounds at the door***

8. Landlady: Alright they do not want to answer. Then I will use my stick! Wake up! Open up! It's your mama, the landlady.

SFX, hitting walking stick on the door harder, her stick on the boys room...

11. SFX: ***Spring-beds squeak***

12. Hassan: ***(on mic, in a whisper)*** Guys wake up -- the landlady is here.

13. Steve: ***(In a whisper)*** Hassan, just tell her we are still sleeping and that it's against our culture to open the door before we have had our breakfast. It can cause bad luck tell her.

14. SFX: ***A loud knock; louder than the first one, a cock crows in the distance***

15. Landlady: Open up -- it's your landlady here...

16. All the boys: ***(Yawn and stretch in their beds)***

17. Simo: ***(whispering)*** We are in trouble! Manuel, just tell her we are still sleeping. She should come another time.

18. Manuel: ***(whispering)*** Why me Simo ?

19. Simo: ***(whispering)*** You speak the same language.

20. SFX: ***Loud knock***

21. Landlady: Open up or else...

22. Manuel: ***(yawning as he talks)*** Oh Mama we are still sleeping.

- 23. Landlady:** Silly thing...so are you dream-talking to me, is that Manuel?
- 24. Steve:** *(yawning)* No, what can we do for you? Do you want breakfast?
- 25. Landlady:** Do not play games with me! I have come to collect my rent money.
- 26. Jimmy:** *(in whisper)* What shall we do Manuel? Tell us! She is your friend.
- 27. Manuel:** *(Whispering)* Let's tell her that we will pay when she improves the sanitary arrangements.
- 30. Steve:** Okay madam ...no problem. We will pay the when you have improved the sanitary facilities.
- 31. Landlady:** Do not be silly...what is wrong with them?
- 32. Manuel:** You see madam, your bathroom is not cemented, there are only two scattered stones. You have to be very physically fit to be able to spread your legs to 90 degrees and step on the two stones just to take a decent bath.
- 33. Landlady:** Stop that nonsense Manuel! I will add more stones if you like.
- 36. SFX:** *Knocks on the door harder*
- 37. All boys:** *(Almost burst out with laughter but suppress it)*
- 38. Simo:** Madam. We're getting dressed -- we will open up for you in a minute. But one more thing...
- 39. Landlady:** What?
- 40. Simo:** The toilet...
- 41. Landlady:** *(Losing patience)*...And what about the toilet?

- 42. Simo:** It is just five meters from where we sleep. And sometimes we have to compete for the space with flies -- the smell is terrible, we can't sleep and it's really bad.
- 43. Landlady:** Nothing can be done about that...
- 44. Simo:** That's not the only problem. Your toilet also lacks a window. The door hardly closes and when you're doing the serious business you can hardly concentrate because you have to wrestle with the door.
- 45. Steve:** When you finally manage to close it, the second round of the battle starts -- you have to hang on to dear life because of the feeling of suffocation.
- 46. Simo:** We can hardly breathe. Mama, your toilet is just a box and it is suffocating -- it's not good for the concentration. As a matter of fact, I've changed my mind -- I will not open the door for you.
- 47. Landlady:** *(laughs out loudly)*...tell me something boys. When you decided to come to this school, did your parents tell you to concentrate on the toilet or on your studies?
- 48. Steve:** Nature calls for both...
- 49. Landlady:** Did I hear Steve's voice?. Now, you silly bunch of kids -- you must know that you also have a role to play in maintaining the sanitary facilities.
- 50. Steve:** Are we not supposed to clean them?
- 51. Landlady:** Correct. And you are supposed to be more responsible when you are using them. Every time you get drunk you lose your senses to the extent that you can hardly make out the difference between an insect and an elephant. You defect, urinate and vomit anywhere and anyhow you like on my property.
- 53. Hassan:** *(loud whisper)* That's Simo and Steve.

54. Steve: shhhhhhhshhhh

55. Landlady: You do not actually deserve any sanitary facilities -- you should use the bushes! Do you expect me to hire someone to give you directions on how to answer your calls of nature each time you have to use my facilities?

57. Boys: *(laugh)*

58. Landlady: You know boys, if you tried to use your senses here we could strike a balance.

59. Manuel: What sort of balance?

60. Landlady: If you cleaned your toilet and bathroom, I would consider reducing your rent.

61. Hassan: Manuel, guys, that would be great...so does that mean we would only pay half of what we owe you?

62. Landlady: Why don't you just open the door and we'll talk about it.

65. SFX: **Door opening.**

66. Landlady: Hurry up boys, come out -- let's make a deal quickly so you are not late for school.

67. SFX: **Beds squeaking and footsteps.**

68. Landlady: Come with me to the latrine and to the bathroom.

SCENE TWO

Landlady, Manuel, Hassan, Jimmy, Simo and Steve outside the latrine and bathroom.

69. SFX: **The neighborhood is waking up slowly, a cock crows, a bicycle bell.**

70. Landlady: You see boys, the deal is that you clean your sanitary facilities and I reduce your rent. Is that okay?

- 71. Allboys:** (All the boys agree in different ways -- some hesitate. some say “Yes” almost at once)
- 72. Steve:** Mama, we can agree to the deal, but honestly your sanitary facilities are in a terrible shape. Where would we begin?
- 75. Landlady:** Good boy Steve. You can use water and soap. You can get a long stick and tie a rug around it. You dip it into soapy water and mop the hard concrete. When you are done, keep the rug in the sun to dry for the next cleaning session. You should also sweep everyday.
- 76. Jimmy:** But Madam how about the smell? It really stinks!
- 77. Landlady:** It’s easy: you can get some dry grass, cover the top of the latrine with it and burn it on top, the burnt grass will definitely fall inside the latrine and this will create a natural and good perfume.
- 78. All boys:** (*Laugh*)
- 80. Simo:** Are we talking about half price or the whole rent in case we agree to do all that?
- 81. Landlady:** Simo, your money problems are never-ending. You will pay 20 percent less of the debt you owe me and 30 percent less of the upcoming rent.
- 82. Manuel:** Alright. I think it’s a good deal.
- 83. Landlady:** (*leaving*) If you don’t come up with the rent I will come back myself. You know, we can do this together boys. Your toilet should not be hell -- it should be a place to enjoy a cup of coffee or even read a book!
- 84. All boys:** (*Laugh*)

END EPISODE 1

Music

(2 Speakers/one for the headlines, one for the rest)

Did you know?

Only half of Africa has access to water supply and sanitation. Sanitation generally refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and feces. This is vital so people do not contract diseases. Clean water is essential for ensuring basic needs. The United Nations estimate that each person needs 20 to 40 liters of water free from harmful contaminants per day. Safe drinking water is necessary for keeping hydrated and avoiding illness. But water is also needed for cooking, washing and flushing toilets.

Toilets

A toilet, lavatory or water closet is a plumbing fixture and disposal system intended for the disposal of bodily waste -- urine and feces. There are different types of toilets -- flush toilets, squat toilets and urinals for men to urinate standing up. Latrines are more basic structures for defecation. They allow for safer and more hygienic disposal of human waste than open defecation. Waste is controlled and decomposed. If bodily waste is not removed from the everyday living space, disease will spread rapidly.

Hand-washing

After using a toilet or a latrine, always wash your hands with soap. Otherwise bacteria from the bodily waste can spread illness, which can be fatal. And make sure your hands are clean before having physical contact with somebody else. And before preparing or eating food. Try to keep the toilet and bathroom as clean as possible so bacteria cannot multiply.

Raising awareness

There are now countless campaigns to ensure that there is more adequate sanitation and clean water supply in Africa. Improved sanitation is directly linked to improved health.

Outro:

And that's all for today's Learning by Ear series on health written by Hope Azeda. Thanks for listening to us. And remember if you want to hear today's program again or any other one or tell your friends about it, please visit our website on www.dw-world.de/lbe. Good Bye.