

Learning by Ear 2010**Theme: Literacy and education****“A GIRL FINISHING SCHOOL”****Episode 09:** *“Papa Wali is in the dark”***Author:** Frédéric Gakpara**Editor:** Yann Durand**Translator:** Anne Thomas

Characters: **Elinam:** *(22 years old, Papa Wali and Mamoua's son, Latifa's older brother. He has just got his master's in civil engineering. He is unemployed and still lives in the big university city 120 kilometers away from his parents' small town.)*

Papa Wali *(55-year-old father of four – Elinam, Latifa, Souleyman and Inès. He runs a metalworkshop but he is illiterate and his business has not been doing well recently because of a lack of modern equipment and bad financial management and marketing. He is currently at home because of eye problems.)*

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

Epiphane *(Papa Wali's 21-year-old employee. He is very intelligent. He has just given the workshop a makeover and is developing, thanks to his literacy classes and a further training course in metalworking.)*

Zakia *(23 years old, a very emancipated girl, Latifa's best friend. She is the marketing director at her tourist agency and still works in the small town she and Latifa are from. Her best friend's brother Elinam has recently started courting her.)*

INTRO

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

Four days after declaring his love to Zakia, Elinam sets off for his home town, which he left almost five years ago. Because Zakia has stopped answering his calls, he fears the worst. The visit comes as a surprise to her. How will she react?

*Nor has Elinam told his family that he is coming home and his parents are stunned when he arrives. That morning at her porridge stand, Mamoua, Elinam's mother, is a changed woman. She has deteriorated physically and seems to be putting little energy into selling her product, as well as into her spurts of anger. As for Papa Wali, he is bedridden when Elinam arrives. Join us and listen in to our ninth episode: "**Papa Wali is in the dark**".*

Scene 1, AT PAPA WALI'S HOUSE

Elinam and Mamoua

1. **ATMO:** **COURTYARD NOISES: HENS - SHEEP - BIRDS – NOT MUCH TRAFFIC**

2. **SFX:** **A TAXI STOPS – SOUND OF DOORS – TRUNK BEING OPENED – LUGGAGE BEING REMOVED.**

3. **Mamoua:** (Shouting from a distance) Eh! Eh! Eh! Elinam! Am I dreaming? Oh! My son!
4. **SFX:** **SOUND OF SLOW DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS (old woman) – SOUND OF NORMAL FOOTSTEPS (her son) converging**
5. **Elinam:** Mom... Wait, I'll just get the bags. I'm coming!
6. **SFX:** **TRUNK BEING CLOSED – CAR STARTS UP**
7. **SFX:** **SOUND OF CHAIRS BEING MOVED**
8. **Mamoua:** Have a seat. I'll bring you some water.
9. **SFX:** **SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS (MAMOUA) DRAGGING IN THE ROOM – GOING AWAY – COMING BACK**
10. **Mamoua:** Here's some water!
11. **SFX:** **POURING WATER INTO GLASSES**
12. **Elinam:** Thank you, Mom! (Drinks for a long time) So Mom, how are you?
13. **Mamoua:** I'm alive, thanks to the grace of God. How about you?

14. **Elinam:** I'm OK, thank you. But... you've gone gray!
15. **Mamoua:** Work and tiredness makes you old, son... But tell me about **you**. How far are you with your studies? When are you going to get a job? I would like to get a taste of your wages before I die!
16. **Elinam:** I've finished my studies. And I'm looking for a job.
17. **Mamoua:** You should just get something to tide you over, enough to feed yourself and get married.
18. **Elinam:** Mhh... (**changing the subject**) Don't you use the living room anymore? Why is everything so dirty?
19. **Mamoua:** I'm too tired to do everything. There's nobody to help me now that Latifa has gone.
20. **Elinam:** What about Souleyman? What does he do?
21. **Mamoua:** He's hardly ever here. He's only interested in the kitchen where he can find food.
22. **Elinam:** And what do you say to him? I've heard he's even stopped going to school.
23. **Mamoua:** What can I say? He's a boy!

24. **Elinam:** So what, Mom? I was at university, I gave classes to schoolchildren to earn enough to pay the rent, I came home to cook, studied before bed and got up early, I cleaned my room and the flat and at the weekend I spent hours washing. Am I not also a boy?
25. **Mamoua:** Didn't you get any help from your sister?
26. **Elinam:** Of course, she helped. But she also had to study and spent whole nights looking after patients. However, she did the shopping and took on my duties when I couldn't do them.
27. **Mamoua:** Well, since you're here now, you should talk to your brother.
28. **Elinam:** You know what? You spoiled him so much that you can't keep him under control anymore.
29. **Mamoua:** **(sighing in a sad way)**
30. **Elinam:** What about Dad?
31. **Mamoua:** He's been bedridden for a few weeks now. His eyes can't stand daylight anymore. He can hardly see anything.
32. **Elinam:** And nobody thought of calling Latifa and me to tell us?
33. **Mamoua:** We didn't want to worry you.

34. **Elinam:** What does the doctor say?
35. **Mamoua:** He doesn't want to go to the hospital.
36. **Elinam:** What? Where is he?
37. **Mamoua:** In the bedroom. I'll go and get him...

MUSIC

Scene 2, AT PAPA WALI'S HOME

Elinam and Papa Wali

38. **SFX:** **FOOTSTEPS (ELINAM) DRAGGING ON THE GROUND**
39. **Papa Wali:** **(in a tired voice)** Welcome, my son!
40. **Elinam:** Dad, why haven't you gone to the hospital?
41. **Papa Wali:** It's too late, my son. I've reached rock bottom.
42. **Elinam:** That's what you say, but not the doctor.

43. **Papa Wali:** You know it's been a long time coming. The tourists your sister's friend brought here once three years ago me gave me gear to protect myself against the arc welding ... but I ignored them trusting my old instincts.... Now I'm paying the price.
44. **Elinam:** So you've decided to just let yourself die? This is suicide!
45. **Papa Wali:** No, that's not it. I'm just throwing in the towel.
46. **Elinam:** And what about the workshop?
47. **Papa Wali:** Epiphane is managing things there. He's a good worker. Better than me even! He's given the business a makeover and turned things around. He's a very nice boy and he has all my confidence.
48. **Elinam:** Well, that's good at least! Let me take you to the hospital early tomorrow morning.
49. **Papa Wali:** It won't make a difference.
50. **Elinam:** Well, at least we'll have tried.
51. **Papa Wali:** If you want...
52. **Elinam:** Good. I'm going to go to the workshop now. (**Getting up**) I'll find out if what people say about Epiphane is true. And I also need to go to Zakia's office.

53. **Papa Wali:** Say hello from me... But don't tell her what kind of state I'm in. She tried to get me to change my ways and I never listened to her. Now I'm ashamed of my ignorance.
54. **Elinam:** (**A bit drily**) It was more than ignorance, Dad. Apparently, you could have taken classes like Epiphane. But you made a different choice. In the end, it was neglect!
55. **Papa Wali:** (**Silence**) ...
56. **Elinam:** (**Apologetic. Realizing that he'd been carried away by emotion**) Sorry....sorry, dad.... (**more calmly**) Right, I have to go. See you later, Dad!
57. **Papa Wali:** (**Silence**) ...
58. **SFX ATMO:** **SOUND OF STEPS GOING AWAY (ELINAM)**
59. **NARRATOR:** *So Elinam has set the goal of his visit: to rescue whatever he can – his family, his father's little business and especially his love for Zakia. He tracked down Epiphane at the workshop and now they are both at Zakia's door. But Epiphane only announced himself at reception so Zakia gets a shock when she sees Elinam...*

Scene 3, AT ZAKIA'S OFFICE

Elinam, Epiphane and Zakia

60. **SFX ATMO:** **OFFICE SOUNDS (UNCLEAR VOICES – PHONES RINGING – PRINTERS)**
61. **Zakia:** **(surprised) Hi Epiphane!**
62. **Epiphane:** **Hi Zakia!**
63. **Zakia:** **Oh! Elinam!**
64. **Elinam:** Hello, Zakia!
65. **Zakia:** **(stuttering, ill at ease) What... what are you doing here?**
66. **Elinam:** Well, you stopped answering my calls and I knew you would have refused to see me if I had announced myself at reception... Can I take a seat?
67. **SFX:** **PULLING CHAIR, SITTING DOWN (RUSTLE OF CLOTHES)**
68. **Zakia:** When did you get here?

69. **Elinam:** I've only just arrived. I just had time to drop off my bags at home.
70. **Zakia:** What about Latifa?
71. **Elinam:** She's OK. But she didn't come back with me.
72. **Zakia:** (no reaction?) (**changing the subject**) It's a bit hot this morning. (**To Epiphane**) How are you, Epiphane?
73. **Epiphane:** I'm very well, big sister!
74. **Zakia:** What about your boss?
75. **Epiphane:** He's very well too!
76. **Elinam:** Zakia, didn't he tell you that Dad was ill?
77. **Zakia:** (**surprised**) No, he didn't tell me. Since when?
78. **Epiphane:** (**Embarrassed**) ... He's been ill for two months now...
79. **Zakia:** (**shocked**) But... Epiphane, when I come to the workshop you always say he's gone out.
80. **Epiphane:** He told me not to tell anyone he was ill.
81. **Zakia:** And so you kept it all to yourself? What's wrong with him?

82. **Epiphane:** He can't see properly anymore...
83. **Zakia:** **(Sigh)** Oh my god! I'm not surprised, Elinam. Your father never protected himself when he was working. Is it serious?
84. **Elinam:** I'm taking him to hospital tomorrow to find out.
85. **Zakia:** **(Very surprised)** Hasn't he been yet?
86. **Elinam:** **(Sighing)** Can we just forget my dad, please? I came to talk to you, Zakia.
87. **Zakia:** **(A silence)** You're not seriously thinking about talking about that here, Elinam?!
88. **Elinam:** I am! It's urgent! **(To Epiphane)** Epiphane, you can go back to the workshop now. We'll see each other tomorrow, all right?
89. **Epiphane:** OK, big brother. Good bye, big sister!
90. **SFX:** **NOISE OF CHAIR AS SOMEONE STANDS UP**
91. **Zakia:** Good bye, Epiphane!
92. **SFX:** **FOOT STEPS (EPIPHANE) WALKING AWAY – AN OFFICE DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**

93. **Zakia:** (Sighing) I'm listening...
94. **Elinam:** I waited all week for you to call me – in vain.
95. **Zakia:** I've been really busy this week.
96. **Elinam:** So busy that you just ignored my calls?
97. **Zakia:** Elinam, I can't just throw myself into a relationship with someone from one day to the next. I need time to think about it. And also you're my best friend's brother. Can't you picture the consequences if things didn't work out?
98. **Elinam:** That's why I took so long to decide. Do you really think I wouldn't take this relationship seriously?
99. **Zakia:** I also need time to decide, Elinam. Who says my future is with you?
100. **Elinam:** I've come here to offer you my love Zakia. I won't leave this city without you!
101. **Zakia:** You cannot be serious!
102. **Elinam:** You've already been disappointed, is that it?
103. **Zakia:** Not me! My mom, yes! So I'm not about to let myself be bitten by a snake without opening my eyes first.
104. **Elinam:** (with emphasis) Zakia. I would never hurt you.

105. **Zakia:** **(pause. Much softer)** Let's not push things, Elinam. We practically haven't seen each other for five years. We have to get to know each other and maybe the rest will follow. That seems to be the wisest decision.
106. **Elinam:** **(reassured)** Perfect! I promise I will be worthy of your trust. Wherever you will be, I will be. And your problems, as well as your joys, will also be mine!
107. **Zakia:** Thank you. Can I take you back to the reception now? I have got so much to do here before lunch!
108. **Elinam;** Don't worry, I'll find the way. Look after yourself!
109. **SFX ATMO:** **NOISE OF CHAIRS – STEPS GOING AWAY (ELINAM)**
110. **Zakia:** Thank you! I'll call you later!
111. **Elinam:** **(Smiling)** Are you sure?
112. **Zakia:** **(Laughing)** Yes I'm ABSOLUTELY sure!
113. **Elinam:** Speak to you later then!
114. **SFX ATMO:** **OFFICE DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**
115. **Zakia:** **(She sighs)**

MUSIC

OUTRO

So Elinam's trip seems to have been successful. That night, he spends a long time on the phone with Zakia. She lends him her motorbike to do some shopping while she's at work. They seem to be getting on very well.

Papa Wali can no longer see the lovebirds. The hospital's diagnosis does not bode well.

But Mamoua can see them perfectly well. Will she approve? She's never liked Zakia, after all. What will Elinam do keep the situation under control? And will Latifa finally be able to wipe away her tears?

To find out, tune in to the final episode of our series, "A Girl Finishing School", a series about illiteracy and education.

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

END OF 9TH EPISODE