

Learning by Ear - Literacy**“A GIRL FINISHING SCHOOL”****Episode 04:** *“Illiteracy kills”***Author:** Frédéric GAKPARA**Editor:** Yann Durand**Translator:** Anne Thomas

Characters: **Papa Wali** (52-year-old father of three – his eldest son is Elinam, then comes his daughter Latifa, and another son Souleyman. He runs a metal workshop shop 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 his desire to learn.)

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.)

Mr Hendrik (67 years old, retired European tourist traveling with his wife Susanna.)

Mrs Hendrik (62 years old, retired European, married to Mr Hendrik)

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.)

Agency head (32-year-old woman, responsible for loans at one of the town's micro-finance agencies. She is very strict.)

INTRO:

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

Although emancipated, Zakia never interfered directly in Latifa's education, but Latifa's parents suspect the young tourist agent of being their daughter's advisor. Accordingly, Mamoua, Latifa's mother, has ended up hating her even more and never misses a chance to talk badly of her.

*That morning, therefore, nobody expected Zakia to turn up at Papa Wali's workshop with a couple of European tourists, Mr and Mrs Hendrik. Listen in to the fourth episode entitled: **Illiteracy kills.***

Scene 1, IN PAPA WALI'S WORKSHOP

Papa Wali, Epiphane, Zakia, Mr and Mrs Hendrik

1. SFX ATMO: METAL SAW + HAMMERING ON A METAL SHEET / FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING (3 PEOPLE)

- 2. Papa Wali:** Welcome!
- 3. Zakia:** Thank you, uncle!
- 4. Mr Hendrik:** Thank you, Sir!
- 5. Mrs Hendrik:** Hello!
- 6. Papa Wali:** (**Jovially**) Hello Sir, Madam. How are you?
- 7. Mr Hendrik:** Very well, thank you. And yourself?
- 8. Papa Wali:** Everything is fine!
- 9. Zakia:** Uncle, this is Mr and Mrs Hendrik. They are tourists. They would like to look around your workshop.
- 10. Papa Wali:** Oh, yes? That’s great!
- 11. Zakia:** (**To the couple**) Papa Wali is the boss here.
- 12. Mr & Mrs Hendrik:** Very glad to meet you, Papa Wali!
- 13. Papa Wali:** Me too. (**To Zakia**) I think I know you, Miss. But...
- 14. Zakia:** My name is Zakia. I’m Latifa’s friend.
- 15. Papa Wali:** That’s it. You work with tourists she told me once...

- 16. Zakia:** Yes, in a tourist agency.
- 17. Papa Wali:** Oh! That’s great! And are our visitors looking for anything in particular?
- 18. Zakia:** Yes, they want to find out how you do arc welding here.
- 19. Papa Wali:** OK! Take a seat!
- 20. Mr & Mrs Hendrik:** Thank you!
- 21. Papa Wali:** Epiphane!
- 22. Epiphane:** Boss?
- 23. Papa Wali:** Can’t you see the people? Get them some chairs and some fresh water instead of staring at them as if they were aliens. Have you never seen a white person before?
- 24. Epiphane:** No... Yes boss! **(He runs into the workshop)**
- 25. SFX ATMO:** **QUICK FOOTSTEPS. LOUD CRASHING NOISES
+ CHAIRS BEING PUT DOWN**
- 26. Mr Hendrik:** I can help him; it’s not a problem...

- 27. Papa Wali:** No, no, no question about it. He can manage on his own. He spends all his time doing nothing. **(Silence. To Epiphane)** Did you clean the chairs properly?
- 28. SFX ATMO:** CARRYING CHAIRS, POURING WATER INTO GLASSES
- 29. Epiphane:** Yes, boss!
- 30. Mr Hendrik:** Don't bother yourself for us, it's all fine. **(Silence)** What are you doing there?
- 31. Papa Wali:** **(Proudly)** Oh, this? I'm making a piece of living room furniture out of wrought iron.
- 32. SFX ATMO: METAL SAW + HAMMERING ON A METAL SHEET**
- 33. Mrs Hendrik:** Has someone placed an order?
- 34. Papa Wali:** No, I want to put it on display and sell it.
- 35. Mr Hendrik:** It's fantastic!
- 36. Mrs Hendrik:** Can we watch you at work?
- 37. Papa Wali:** Of course! No problem!
- 38. SFX ATMO :** NOISE OF ARC WELDING

NARRATOR: *While the tourists are busy discovering the secrets of arc welding from Papa Wali, Mamoua is on the other side of town with the head of the micro-finance agency that gave her a loan.*

Scene 2, AT THE MICRO-FINANCE AGENCY

Mamoua and the agency head

39. SFX ATMO: **OFFICE SOUNDS – UNCLEAR VOICES -
PRINTER – PHONES RINGING**

40. Agency head: Mrs Mamoua, we gave you a loan so you could improve your business, not so you could bury your mother!

41. Mamoua: So, if something terrible happens to me and I have some money, I can't use it?

42. Agency head: No! It's not your money! This money is only for your business!

43. Mamoua: Auntie, my mother won't die a second time so I have to bury her with dignity. But I'll pay back your money sooner or later.

44. Agency head: Sooner or later? I don't think you understand the gravity of your actions, madam! You can't take any risks with money that belongs to a bank! **(Shouting)** What is this illiterate behavior?

- 45. Mamoua:** Why are you insulting me? I said I would pay you back!
- 46. Agency head:** You’re three months behind, madam! And not only has your business not grown but it even seems as if it’s dwindling!
- 47. Mamoua:** My husband has got problems at the moment. My little business is feeding the whole family. Sometimes I have to lend him money so he can pay the electricity bill in his workshop.
- 48. Agency head:** Oh, yes, you’re the Good Samaritan and I’m the evil moneylender! He’s not the only one who needs money. We also need money, especially as it’s ours in the first place! (**Scornfully**) Go on! Off you go!
- 49. Mamoua:** Thank you, auntie!
- 50. SFX ATMO:** **CHAIR+ STEPS GOING AWAY**
- 51. Agency head:** (**Alone**) What a woman! Only illiterate people are that lax!

NARRATOR: *A bad experience for Mamoua, who realizes how many prejudices there are against ordinary people... But let's go back to Papa Wali's workshop. He is full of pride at his welding station. And rightly so! In these difficult times, he has a chance to demonstrate his know-how to European tourists.*

Scene 3, IN PAPA WALI'S WORKSHOP

Papa Wali, Epiphane, Zakia, Mr and Mrs Hendrik

52. SFX ATMO: **NOISE OF ARC WELDING + HAMMERING ON A METAL SHEET**

53. Mr Hendrik: (He shouts over the noise) Don't you ever protect yourself?

54. Papa Wali: What? (interrupting his work)

55. Mr Hendrik: Don't you wear gloves or a mask or gear to protect yourself from the x-rays?

56. Papa Wali: What's all that?

- 57. Mr Hendrik:** You know, the flames from arc welding are very dangerous. They emit a high level of ultra-violet rays that instantly destroy the eye's retina, the mucous membrane and can even perforate the inner organs... You have to wear a mask, gloves and protective leather gear. The rays can't get through the leather.
- 58. Papa Wali:** If I had the money for all that I would spend it on stuff we need at home! I've always worked like this! I've never had any problems with my eyes. You Westerners are fragile! Not us!
- 59. Zakia:** Papa Wali, that's what we always say and when we die for no good reason, we blame it on witchcraft!
- 60. Papa Wali:** Zakia, why do you young people today always want to explain the world to the old men?
- 61. Mrs Hendrik:** We didn't want to offend you, Papa Wali! We were just worried about your health. All of us here are exposed. But you're right, experience makes a difference!
- 62. Mr Hendrik:** (**Looks at Epiphane working**) What's this young man doing?
- 63. Papa Wali:** Epiphane? He's bending bars for the chairs.
- 64. Mr Hendrik:** It must be hard to make sure that all the bars are the same shape...

- 65. Papa Wali:** We're used to it! Epiphane has been well trained!
- 66. Mr Hendrik:** Wouldn't you save money by sub-contracting to companies that have the right equipment?
- 67. Papa Wali:** What does sub-contract mean?
- 68. Mrs Hendrik:** To pay another company so that they bend the bars for you.
- 69. Mr Hendrik:** That way you would save time and energy and the shapes would be more precise.
- 70. Papa Wali:** I've heard that the metal workshop near the market has got big machines. But they must be expensive!
- 71. Zakia:** We also went there.
- 72. Mr Hendrik:** Where? That place we went to earlier on?
- 73. Zakia:** Yes...
- 74. M. Hendrik:** If you like, we can come to get you tomorrow and go together. It doesn't cost anything to find out.
- 75. Zakia:** Do you agree, uncle?
- 76. Papa Wali:** OK, come whenever you like tomorrow. I'll be here.

- 77. Mrs Hendrik:** Is Epiphane your son or your employee?
- 78. Papa Wali:** Epiphane is my employee.
- 79. Mrs Hendrik:** Where did he learn the trade?
- 80. Papa Wali:** Here! He was my apprentice. Now he’s a good worker.
- 81. Mrs Hendrik:** So, he’s on the payroll?
- 82. Papa Wali:** Erm... No... not really. He didn’t pay for the apprenticeship so he’s paying me back by working. He sleeps here and gets enough to eat...
- 83. Mrs Hendrik:** He sleeps in the workshop? Doesn’t he have a family?
- 84. Papa Wali:** No, he’s an orphan. He was on the streets before coming here. I took him in and that was it!
- 85. Mrs Hendrik:** But he did go to school, didn’t he?
- 86. Papa Wali:** Not at all!
- 87. Mrs Hendrik:** Oh really? **(To Epiphane)** Epiphane, are you all right?
- 88. Epiphane:** **(Stops hammering)** Yes, madam!
- 89. Mrs Hendrik:** Didn’t you want to learn to read and write?

- 90. Epiphane:** I did, madam!
- 91. Mrs Hendrik:** (to Papa Wali) Papa Wali, would you mind if he took evening classes?
- 92. Papa Wali:** Not at all! But I don't know how it would help!
- 93. Mr Hendrik:** It always helps. To write bills, to draw up quotes, to make measurements, to write one's name, do the accounts, to find out about labor rights, to make models, to do marketing for the workshop... You can do a lot thanks to school. (**Laughing**) You could also go to evening classes! Why not? You'll just improve your skills.
- 94. Papa Wali:** Can you picture me sat on a school bench with children? Ridiculous!
- 95. Mr Hendrik:** Papa Wali, it's not ridiculous to learn how to read and write and to be able to give a customer a bill! And evening classes are organized according to age and level.
- 96. Mrs Hendrik:** He's got plenty of time to think about it, Charles.
- 97. Mr Hendrik:** Of course! In any case, congratulations! You put all your heart into your work! It's impressive!
- 98. Mrs Hendrik:** Can we buy this furniture from you?

99. Papa Wali: Of course!

100. Mrs Hendrik: Great! We’ll come to get it before we leave. Thank you for your hospitality! My husband and I have got a foundation, the Hendrik Foundation. It’s so that small businesses in Africa can boost skills and capacity, especially through training and consulting. We can talk about it tomorrow. OK?

101. Papa Wali: OK! Thank you for deciding to visit me!

102. Mrs Hendrik: You’re welcome, Papa Wali! Good bye!

103. SFX ATMO: SOUND OF CHAIRS AND STEPS

104. Mr Hendrik: Good bye and thank you!

105. Papa Wali: Good bye! See you tomorrow!

106. Mrs Hendrik: See you tomorrow, Epiphane!

107. Epiphane: Yes, see you tomorrow!

108. Mr Hendrik and Zakia: See you tomorrow!

OUTRO:

Illiteracy appears to be a brake on communication, a brake on good social relations, on blossoming, on development. Will Papa Wali and his family manage to relieve themselves of this burden? What will the Hendrik Foundation be able to do? What future lies ahead for Latifa? Are her daily life and her relationship with her parents going to improve? Will she have the chance to prove that her parents were wrong? To find out, tune in to the next episode of "A Girl Finishing School", a radio drama about illiteracy and education by Frédéric Gakpara.

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

END OF 4th EPISODE