

Learning by Ear 2010

Theme: Literacy and education

“A GIRL FINISHING SCHOOL”

Episode 08: “*An affair of the heart...*”

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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. He has been secretly in love with Zakia for a long time*)

Zakia (*23 years old, a very emancipated girl, Latifa's best friend, has just been promoted to marketing director in her tourist agency and still works in the small town she and Latifa are from.*)

Latifa (*18 years old, Papa Wali and Mamoua's daughter. She is doing an internship at an ophthalmology clinic after qualifying as a medical assistant. She has been living with her older brother in the big city for over three years*)

INTRO

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

Since seeing beautiful Zakia at the tourism fair, Elinam has spent most of his money on credit to talk to her on the phone. They talk about everything except for Elinam's feelings for her, which he still hasn't expressed to her.

His sister Latifa, for her part, has surrounded herself in a mysterious silence. She always seems preoccupied. She is doing everything to succeed during a six-month internship at an ophthalmology clinic that she got after qualifying as a medical assistant.

Meanwhile, Zakia only seems to be focused on her work at the tourism agency. Compared to all the men, both young and wealthy, that she meets in her agency, Civil engineering student Elinam can hardly keep up.

But today, Elinam decides to go for it, even if he risks being rejected.

*This is the eighth episode: **An affair of the heart...***

Scene 1, IN ZAKIA'S OFFICE

Zakia and Elinam on the telephone

1. **SFX ATMO:** **OFFICE SOUNDS – UNCLEAR VOICES – PHONE RINGING – PRINTER**
2. **SFX ATMO:** **LANDLINE RINGING**
3. **Zakia:** Yes, hello?
4. **Elinam:** Hi Zakia!

5. **Zakia:** Hello Elinam! How are you?
6. **Elinam:** Very well thanks! How about you?
7. **Zakia:** Fine, but I'm a bit tired. What's up?
8. **Elinam:** Er...Erm... I just wanted to hear your voice...
9. **Zakia:** Oh, really? (**laughing**) I hope it isn't too ugly!
10. **Elinam:** (**Softly**) Angelic more like!
11. **Zakia:** You never ask me for favors so why are you flattering me?
12. **Elinam:** I'm not flattering you! What I'm saying is true.
(**Emphasising**) Your voice enchants me, imprisons me and transports me to unknown places!
13. **Zakia:** (**Amused**) Did you do the wrong course at university?
You should have done humanities, poetry in particular!
Or do you think I'm one of your bridges... I swear I won't let you tarmac me!
14. **Elinam:** No, nothing like that! The only thing to say is that you're a treasure.
15. **Zakia:** All of sudden, I've got all these qualities.
Did you dial a wrong number by any chance?

16. **Elinam:** Just because I've never told before you doesn't mean I've never thought it.
17. **Zakia:** Oh, and he's a grand theorizer on top of everything!
18. **Elinam:** Is it a theory to admit that I'm in love with you?
19. **Zakia:** **(Silence)** ...
20. **Elinam:** Hello?
21. **Zakia:** **(Very reserved)** Yes, I'm listening...
22. **Elinam:** Did you hear what I just said?
23. **Zakia:** Would you mind hanging up and I'll call you back from my mobile?
24. **Elinam:** OK, speak to you later.
25. **SFX ATMO:** **SOUND OF STEPS PACING UP AND DOWN**
26. **Zakia:** **(Loud sigh)** Oh my goodness!
27. **SFX ATMO** **NUMBER BEING DIALED ON A MOBILE**

28. **Elinam:** Hello?
29. **Zakia:** Hello! I'm listening...
30. **Elinam:** I asked you a question...
31. **Zakia:** What was it again?
32. **Elinam:** Do you think it's a theory that I'm in love you?
33. **Zakia:** You know that it's not the 1st of April today, don't you?
34. **Elinam:** When are you going to take me seriously?
35. **Zakia:** When you stop playing around!
36. **Elinam:** I've never been so serious in my life.
37. **Zakia:** I don't think I've ever met a better actor!
38. **Elinam:** Does this mean you're sending me packing?
39. **Zakia:** What do you want me to say?
40. **Elinam:** Tell me if you'll go out with me, yes or no...

41. **Zakia:** (A little annoyed) I've been your little sister's friend for almost 10 years. You barely looked at me when we were at school. And even at the trade fair you didn't talk to me much. And now all of a sudden you're in love and you want me to fall into your arms. Is it because you're now a qualified engineer, or what?
42. **Elinam:** I'm so sorry! I didn't want to offend you. The fact that I'm a qualified engineer has nothing to do with anything. I was scared of telling you what I felt about you. I was so shy. But now I've accepted that my heart has chosen you and I have to tell you!
43. **Zakia:** (Mockingly) Mister has buried his shyness and wants to go out with his big sister. You do remember that I'm a year older than you, don't you?
44. **Elinam:** Age doesn't matter. It's a question of mentality.
45. **Zakia:** (Mockingly) And when did your mentality go in this direction?
46. **Elinam:** Please Zakia, don't be cynical! It was a real struggle to force myself to tell you how I feel. I respect you enormously... your culture, your qualifications, your combativeness, everything you've done for my sister, your morality... I know I don't deserve you, I know...

47. **Zakia:** (Sighing, a bit disoriented) Please, Elinam, how about talking about this later? I don't know what to say... and I'm at the office... this is all a bit sudden...this whole story...
48. **Elinam:** It's not a story, Zakia, I've finally managed to tell you how I feel.
49. **Zakia:** (Silence)
50. **Elinam:** Hello?
51. **Zakia:** (Sighing) I'll call you tonight, OK?
52. **Elinam:** OK... Thanks for listening in any case. Have a good day and take care!
53. **Zakia:** Thank you! Good bye!

MUSIC

54. **NARRATOR:** *Later that night in his room, Elinam can't wait for Zakia to call but a strange noise attracts his attention. He can hear sniffing coming from his sister's room. He goes to find out what's going on with Latifa, whom he's practically ignored recently.*

Scene 2, IN LATIFA'S ROOM

Elinam and Latifa

55. **SFX ATMO:** **NOISE OF BED SPRINGS, APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS IN ROOM (ELINAM), DOOR BEING OPENED AND SHUT**
56. **Elinam:** Latifa, what's going on?
57. **Latifa:** **(Sniffling)**
58. **Elinam:** **(softly)** Latifa, what's wrong?
59. **Latifa:** **(Sniffling)** Nothing...
60. **Elinam:** You can't be crying for no reason?
61. **Latifa:** (...)
62. **Elinam:** Have I done anything wrong?
63. **Latifa:** No...
64. **Elinam:** Is there a problem at work?
65. **Latifa:** No...
66. **Elinam:** Have you got money problems?

67. **Latifa:** (Silence) No...
68. **Elinam:** Well, you must have some reason for crying.
69. **Latifa:** (Silence)
70. **Elinam:** Are you missing home?
71. **Latifa:** (Silence)
72. **Elinam:** (Coaxing her) I know that I haven't been looking after you. You know, it's not easy for me to be unemployed after so many years of striving so hard and denying myself so much. But you are still my much-loved sister and I want to share everything with you. So tell me what's up, please.
73. **Latifa:** (Wiping her tears and blowing her nose) The head doctor at the clinic today told me it was a waste that I hadn't taken my high-school leaving certificate and done medicine at university. He said I could have had a great career!
74. **Elinam:** So you blame me for having suggested that you become a medical assistant?
75. **Latifa:** No... I don't blame you...

76. **Elinam:** (Silence) You know, I just wanted to make sure you wouldn't have to give up your education entirely.
77. **Latifa:** You don't have to justify yourself, it's not your fault. It's Mom and Dad who didn't back me up, otherwise I would be at university today!
78. **Elinam:** Latifa, you have to get over this, otherwise, you're going to suffer all your life, whatever you achieve. I'm proud that you managed to get an education, but I get annoyed when you start to feel sorry for yourself and lash out at the first person you see.
79. **Latifa:** (Still crying) I'm not accusing you.
80. **Elinam:** No, but what effect do you think it has on me to see you crying like this? I saved you from becoming an anonymous, ailing housewife in the provinces. We worked for years so that we wouldn't have to cry today. What more could we have done with our meager resources? You've shut yourself up in an ivory tower. You always seem anxious, sad... You look twice your age and you're barely 19!
81. **Latifa:** Dad's situation has improved but he hasn't given us any help at all. Why shouldn't I cry?

82. **Elinam:** I cut the cords with our parents a long time back because they don't have a clue. But we have to forgive them when we're going through a rough patch. Mom and Dad are the victims of their illiteracy. How can they understand and like something that they have never known? We've got to alter this situation for the next generation.
83. **Latifa:** But without my high-school certificate, what differentiates me from someone who's illiterate?
84. **Elinam:** You're joking, aren't you? (**Laughter**) If you really were illiterate you wouldn't be crying about it. You're crying because you've discovered how important education is.
85. **Latifa:** I'm crying because my horizons seem so limited now that I am just a medical assistant.
86. **Elinam:** (**Getting angry**) But you should be happy to be wearing a white uniform and to be paid during your internship. I've got nothing although I've got a master's in my pocket. I don't even have an unpaid internship, so don't start... Have fun crying the night away! (**He gets up and opens the door**)
87. **SFX:** **FOOTSTEPS (ELINAM) GOING AWAY. DOOR OPENING.**
88. **SFX:** **DOOR SLAMMING**
89. **SFX:** **DOOR OPENING**

90. **Elinam:** Oh and I almost forgot! I'm going to go home at the weekend to see what we can do about our little brother!
91. **Latifa:** **(Sulking)** Yeah, right! You want to meet Zakia, you mean!
92. **Elinam:** What's this now about Zakia?
93. **Latifa:** Oh, do you really think I'm an idiot?
94. **Elinam:** So tell me what you know then?
95. **Latifa:** **(Sarcastically)** Mister, it's your affair, not mine! Have a good trip! And tell her that I've got used to her silence. She's got someone else to talk to anyway!
96. **Elinam:** **(Smiling)** Wow, you really have got a lot on your mind!
97. **Latifa:** Don't think I'm going to clutter my mind with someone else's love stories!
98. **Elinam:** You were just provoking me were you? Looking for something?
99. **Latifa:** Like what? If I'm looking for you, I just need to ask Zakia to get hold of you!
100. **Elinam:** This all sounds like jealousy to me!

101. **Latifa:** Me, jealous? (**Laughing like a gossip**)
102. **Elinam:** Find yourself a boyfriend! It will do you some good.
103. **Latifa:** Have a good trip, Mister Head-over-heels-in-love!

MUSIC

OUTRO

So love has reared its head in the lives of Papa Wali and Mamoua's children, giving hope to Elinam's heart but filling Latifa's with jealousy. Despite the importance of Elinam's words, Zakia seems to have forgotten her promise to call. Elinam waited until he fell asleep. Will Elinam go home as promised? What awaits him at his parents'? Will Zakia accept him?

To find out, tune in to the next 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 8th EPISODE