

Learning by Ear – Girls’ Rights

Episode 02

Title: Female Circumcision - A story of Girls’ Rights

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Characters

SCENE 1: TEACHER MONA’S HOME

NARRATOR - 30s: MALE
CIRO - 15: FEMALE
CHEPTOO - 15: FEMALE
TEACHER MONA - 35: FEMALE
FATUMA 14: FEMALE

SCENE 2 FATUMA’S PARENTS HOMESTEAD

NARRATOR - 30s: MALE
TEACHER MONA - 35: FEMALE
ELDER JACOB - 60S MALE
JANET - 30S FEMALE
3 - 4 ELDERS - MIXED GENDER, 40-70S

SCENE 3 SCHOOL CLASSROOM

TEACHER MONA - 35: FEMALE
CLASS MIXED GENDER 14-16
CIRO – 15: FEMALE

CHEPTOO - 15: FEMALE

NARRATOR - 30s: MALE

SCENE 4: FATUMA’S PARENTS HOMESTEAD

CIRO – 15: FEMALE

FATUMA - 14: FEMALE

CHEPTOO - 15: FEMALE

NARRATOR - 30s: MALE

SCENE 5: JANET’S OFFICE

JANET - 30s FEMALE

CHEPTOO - 15 FEMALE

FATUMA - 14: FEMALE

CIRO – 15: FEMALE

SCENE 6 FATUMA HOMESTEAD

ELDER JACOB - 60S MALE

JANET - 30S FEMALE

NARRATOR - 30S: MALE

SCENE 7: SCHOOL COMPOUND

CIRO – 15: FEMALE

TEACHER MONA - 35: FEMALE

FATUMA - 14: FEMALE

CHEPTOO - 15: FEMALE

NARRATOR - 30s: MALE

CLASS - MIXED GENDER, 14-16 YEARS

INTRO

1. **MUSIC: THEME MUSIC**

2. **NARRATOR** Hello and welcome to Episode **TWO** of the “Learning by Ear” **Girls’ Rights** series. In the last Episode, Ciro and Cheptoo sneaked their friend Fatuma out of her bedroom where she was locked up by her parents, pending a forced marriage. They are daring but good friends. At the end of the episode, they ran off with Fatuma and headed to Teacher Mona’s home in search of help and guidance. In today’s episode the girls are confronted with a new problem: female circumcision. Listen on and follow the drama that has become the search for ‘Girls’ Rights’.

SCENE 1: TEACHER MONA’S HOME

3. **SOUNDS: RUSHING MULTIPLE PAIRS OF FEET. PANTING. SIGHING.**
4. **SFX: LOUD REPETITIVE KNOCK ON DOOR.**
5. **SFX: FATUMA CRIES STEADILY**

6. **CIRO** Teacher Mona! Teacher Mona! Open up, please!
7. **CHEPTOO** Open Teacher, it is urgent! urgent!
8. **SOUND: FATUMA CRIES LOUDER**
9. **SFX: HEAVY MOVEMENT. FURNITURE MOVES AND CRUSHES.**
10. **TEACHER MONA** Who is there? What do you want?
11. **CIRO** It’s us, Teacher, your students, me Ciro, Cheptoo and Fatuma.
12. **TEACHER MONA** What? What are you doing here at this hour?
13. **CHEPTOO** It’s Fatu... she is getting married
14. **SFX: DOOR HATCH SOUND. DOOR OPENS.**
15. **TEACHER MONA** What? Fatuma got married?
16. **CIRO** We stole her... from her husband-to-be.
17. **CHEPTOO** Teacher, you have to hide her here.
18. **TEACHER MONA** Girls, girls, slow down. Do you mean to say that the reason Fatuma failed to attend school today was because she was going to be married off?

19. **CIRO** (INTERRUPTS) To an old man
20. **TEACHER MONA** (WITH URGENCY) Get in here, girls.
Stay inside my house. I will go to see
Fatuma’s parents. No one leaves. Ok?

SCENE 2: FATUMA’S PARENTS HOMESTEAD

21. **SFX: FARM SOUNDS**

22. **SFX: TROUBLED MURMURING**

23. **TEACHER MONA** (FIRMLY) I am here to speak to
Fatuma’s father.
24. **ELDER JACOB** Who wants to talk to him? Woman, can
you not see we have a crisis here?
25. **TEACHER MONA** I am Teacher Mona. Fatuma’s teacher.
You are even in a bigger crisis. With me
here is Janet, the local social worker.
26. **JANET** We want to talk about Fatuma and the
impending marriage.
27. **ELDER JACOB** Do you know I may have to return the
dowry of a herd of 50 cattle? Fatuma

was going to make a good wife for him...
she is ,..

28. **JANET** Stop there! Young girls are not stock items to be traded. Fatuma has a right to complete her education and start her own career. When she is of age she can get married when she wants and when she is ready...
29. **ELDER JACOB** I am the elder in this home, you don’t tell me what to do.
30. **JANET** We do not tell you what to do. We try to educate you and also remind you of the laws governing the children. Fatuma is a minor. Minors do not get married. It’s criminal and punishable.
31. **ELDER JACOB** (ANGRY) Anyway, as a result of your influence, she is not even ready for marriage. She has to be circumcised first. We are already organising it.
32. **TEACHER MONA/JANET** What???

33. **ELDER JACOB** Ladies, your visit is over!

34. **NARRATOR** Teacher Mona and Social Worker Janet have more problems than they realised. Her father has more plans for Fatuma. Is he serious? Will Fatuma have to go through female genital mutilation? FGM includes procedures that cut or injure parts of a woman's genital organs. Mutilated girls and women face irreversible lifelong health risks.

The two women leave the homestead but they suspect the problem is not over. They promise each other to keep an eye on Fatuma.

SCENE 3: SCHOOL CLASSROOM.

35. **SOUND: STUDENTS MURMURING**

36. **SFX: FURNITURE MOVEMENTS AS STUDENTS FIND THEIR SEATS**

37. **TEACHER MONA** Good morning class.

38. **CLASS** Good morning Teacher Mona.
39. **TEACHER MONA** Today, we will talk about your right to education. Remember you all have a right to go to school and get your education. Your parents are obligated to ensure your education.
40. **CIRO** Cheptoo is so lucky; her family got her a job as a receptionist in the city hotel.
41. **CHEPTOO** (SMUGLY) And I want to go and work there immediately... you should see the hotel, it is....
42. **TEACHER MONA** (VERY STERN) Stop right there, girl! First get your education. What did I say, students?
43. **STUDENTS** First get our education.
44. **CHEPTOO** (SMUGGLY) But Teacher Mona, I do not need a degree to be a receptionist in a 5 star hotel. My education and personality are already enough.

45. **TEACHER MONA** But with more education, Cheptoo, you can be the manager of the hotel. Or do you want to settle with being a Receptionist?

46. **CHEPTOO** Well, if you put it that way. I want to be the Manager.

47. **TEACHER MONA** Good. If you are ever forced to leave school for marriage or go through female circumcision, or to go to work; you should know it is wrong and it affects your future. You must come to me or your local Social Worker.

By the way, where is Fatuma? Has anyone seen Fatuma?

48. **NARRATOR** The friends Ciro and Cheptoo are worried about Fatuma’s whereabouts. They decide to pay another visit to her parents' home. Let’s join them and find out what is happening to Fatuma this time.

SCENE 4: FATUMA’S HOMESTEAD

49. **SFX: FARM NOISES**

50. **SOUNDS: A LOT OF MURMURING.**

51. **CIRO** Fatuma... Fatuma... what are you doing at home. We stopped the marriage, why were you not at school today?

52. **FATUMA** (EXCITED) Oh, my parents said I am now old enough to be a woman. You see, I am not getting married now, but when I do, I will be a full woman.

53. **CHEPTOO** (SARCASTIC) What are you now, half a woman?

54. **FATUMA** Cheptoo, you are from the city, you do not understand these things. You see, all the girls my age have to go through an initiation process. This makes us adults. Full women.

55. **CHEPTOO** You mean have your private parts chopped off! It’s a crude and barbaric practice.

56. **FATUMA** No no... friends, you do not understand this. It is the tradition of my people. My mother went through it, my sisters and

my cousins. It is my turn now. All the girls my age are going through it this week.

57. **CHEPTOO**

Fatuma, our friend. You will not go through with this.

58. **FATUMA**

It is not for you to say. I have to do it otherwise I will be an outcast. I will be a laughing stock.

59. **CIRO**

That is no reason to go through something that is painful and affects your health in the future.

60. **CHEPTOO**

Fatuma, I have an idea. Tomorrow, let’s go see Janet the social worker. If she says it is ok, we will not trouble you again.

61. **NARRATOR**

Fatuma the dutiful daughter is again in trouble. Her ignorance and blind faith is her undoing. How will her friends convince her that some things, though okay with her parents, are not good for her? Will Fatuma ever find the right

balance? Listen on, to what happens in Janet's office.

SCENE 5: JANET’S OFFICE

62. **JANET** So, young ladies, what can I do for you?

63. **CHEPTOO** Fatuma wants to be circumcised!

64. **FATUMA** Cheptoo, must you always be so blunt?

65. **CIRO** Well, if you are going to have a part of you chopped off, we can as well be open about it.

66. **FATUMA** Ms Janet, please tell them....

67. **JANET** Just stop there. Fatuma, you can not, you should not.

68. **FATUMA** Why? It is expected of me.

69. **JANET** You will be a girl exercising her rights. These are modern times. Our traditions are good, but there are some that need to be modified. Like female genital mutilation.

70. **FATUMA** But my parents and relatives don’t know that.

71. **JANET** I will come over and have a chat with your parents. Fatuma, you will not be an outcast but a leader among your age mates. A leader of girls’ rights.
- Now, when can we go see your parents?

SCENE 6: FATUMA PARENTS’ HOME

72. **SFX; FARM SOUNDS.**

73. **ELDER JACOB** Are you not that snooty Social Worker, Janet?
74. **JANET** I am glad you remember me Elder Jacob. I am here about Fatuma.
75. **ELDER JACOB** Why am I not surprised? You stopped the marriage and lost me a herd of cattle. What have you come to make me lose this time?
76. **JANET** You will not lose anything, but you will gain a healthy daughter who can bear

you grandchildren when the time is right. Fatuma should not go through female circumcision.

77. ELDER JACOB

Says who! It’s our tradition. My girl must become a woman. She must learn how to do what women do. She has a lot to learn to be a woman.

78. JANET

I could not agree more. All girls her age have a lot to learn about their bodies, their health and even about relationships with the opposite sex.

79. ELDER JACOB

(LAUGHING) Finally we agree on something. It is all planned out.

80. JANET

(LAUGHING) Glad we agree, we too have it all planned. Every other weekend, we have classes for all the girls her age at the school where speaker after speaker will educate them on womanhood issues. Classes start this weekend. Make sure Fatuma arrives on time.

81. ELDER JACOB

What?!

82. JANET In this special class we’ll discuss different perspectives and challenges of young women in our society.

83. NARRATOR Fatuma’s father might not appreciate changing traditional procedures right now, but he has learnt that there are different ways of becoming a mature woman. He realised that girls can be educated on womanhood issues without going through genital mutilation. The school and the community will now organise educational sessions also for elders and try to save the girls from mutilation.

SCENE 7: SCHOOL COMPOUND.

84. SFX: SCHOOLROOM NOISES

85. CIRO Teacher Mona... ?

86. TEACHER MONA Yes Ciro?

87. CIRO Teacher, I’m really scared of growing up. Things were much easier when we were little girls.

88. **TEACHER MONA** Interesting. Why do you say so?
Fatuma, what do you think?
89. **FATUMA** (SADLY) I am so confused, I want to
respect my parents, my traditions, I also
want to know what I want... what are my
rights in... in... everything
90. **TEACHER MONA** And you Cheptoo, what do you have to
say?
91. **CHEPTOO** (WITH BRAVADO). It is easy, teacher.
When my father bought a car, it came
with a manual. Someone needs to give
us a manual on what to do and not what
to do. Would that not be easier?
92. **ALL** LAUGHTER
93. **CIRO** I have an idea. Why don’t we form a
young girls’ club where we discuss our
issues. We are all so different; Cheptoo
from the city, Fatuma from a traditional
village family, and me, my parents and
uncle have never been to school.
94. **FATUMA** That is good. We can share experiences
and discuss our rights.

95. **CHEPTOO** But clubs do things...activities... what will be our activities?
96. **CIRO** We will debate.
97. **CHEPTOO** Like a Parliament... come to think about it. We can have a girls' parliament.
98. **CIRO** (WITH GUSTO) I propose that this class forms a Parliament for Girls
99. **FATUMA** I second
100. **CIRO** Motion passed. From today henceforth, the girls, we the girls, shall meet to debate issues affecting us - particularly our rights. Those in favour say Yea.
101. **CLASS** (LOUDLY STAMPING FEET) Yea... yea... yea.....

102. THEME MUSIC

OUTRO

103. **NARRATOR** The Girls’ Parliament is born! The girls have realised that despite their different backgrounds, their concerns and issues as young teenagers are similar. Teacher Mona and Janet the Social Worker will assist them with information and by intervening with their parents as they

debate the issues. Lets join the girls in the next episode of ‘Learning by Ear’.

104.

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