

Title: Under the Mango Trees

EPISODE 8: Life changing consequences

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Sc.1 Interior. Afternoon ambience.

List of characters:

- Children in background
- Bella (f, 18+)
- Desirée (f, 16)
- Eric (m, 18)

Scene 2: In the clinic. Bella talks to a young woman in her early twenties.

List of characters:

- Bella (f, 18+)
- Eric (m, 18)
- Narrator
- Woman (in her early twenties)
- Lorraine (f, 18)
- Sazi (m, 20)
- Grandma (f, 60+)
- People in background (lining up at clinic)

Welcome to *Learning by Ear* and Episode Eight of our 10 – part radio drama series, “Under the Mango Trees” about family planning.

In today's episode Eric pursues his idea to research family planning methods with the help of Desirée and her sister, Bella. But will Grandma Linda tolerate such talk in her house?

SIG.TUNE UP HOLD UNDER AND FADE

NARRATOR: Desirée's mother, April, had always stressed to her daughters that being a woman was not easy. Desirée and Bella would both have to assert themselves if they didn't want to stay at home, bearing one child after another, as she had done. Bella had taken the first step and moved out to live with Robert. In spite of what Granma Linda hoped, she did not want to have children straight away and she willingly shares her reasons with Eric and Desirée one afternoon, as Eric takes notes for his research.

Sc.1 Interior. Afternoon ambience.

SFX: Background birds/children

FADE IN DIALOGUE

1. BELLA: The nearest clinic is in Kentown. That's 20 kms. away. That would have meant a trip of nearly an hour by bus. So I was looking for a contraceptive method which meant that I didn't have to travel to Kentown and back too often, a method that could be reversed later on, when I wanted children.

2. DESIRÉE : Did you not want to use a traditional method like Granma Linda recommends?
3. BELLA: Well, it's not always reliable. You will learn later, Des, that using that method involves abstaining on certain days. But, as you can imagine, that can be a problem. I don't know when I'm safe and when I'm not.
4. DESIRÉE: Nor do I. My cycle is very irregular.
5. BELLA: Exactly! Sometimes mine is 28 days; sometimes 32 days; so how can I work out which days are the two days when I am actually ovulating?
6. DESIRÉE : Our teacher at school told us there's a prickling sensation on one side during ovulation. Don't you feel that?
7. BELLA: (laughing) No! And anyway, I might mistake it for indigestion. I can't risk it. I don't want to get pregnant yet. I left home, as you know, Des, to get some peace and quiet so that I could study. I needed some kind of contraception. That's where your mum, Doctor Alice, was so helpful, Eric.
8. ERIC: And? What did she suggest?

9. BELLA: She explained to me about the IUD, the injection and the Diaphragm.
10. ERIC: Ah! Perfect. Three different methods. Please explain!
11. BELLA: Hey, this is fun talking to you two! It's like being on the radio!
12. DESIRÉE : It's fun for me too. I'm learning so much! Go on, Bella. What does IUD stand for?
13. BELLA: Intrauterine device – it's a copper coil that is inserted inside the uterus which is where fertilisation takes place. A doctor must insert it. You must not do it yourself.
14. DESIRÉE : And the Diaphragm?
15. BELLA: That is very different. It looks like a plastic cap. Eric's mum showed me how I would have to insert it by myself. I slip it inside with the help of a special cream.
16. ERIC: And you can't leave it in. You must take it out and put on fresh lubricant every single time. It's like with the condom - you have to take it off after you've used it once.

17. BELLA: Exactly. And this is not easy to do in the heat of the moment. And the diaphragm is messier because of the cream. (laughing) It slipped right out of my hand once! Like a fish! But some women prefer the Diaphragm. They say it seems more natural. It doesn't interfere with your periods, and you use it only when you need it and it's not permanent. Also, it's a cheaper short-term method than injections or implants.
18. DESIRÉE : Ok! What do you know about these other methods?
19. BELLA: Well, interestingly I was standing in the queue waiting to have my IUD inserted and a woman next to me began chatting.

FLASHBACK MUSIC

Scene 2: In the clinic. Bella talks to a young woman in her early twenties.

SFX: FADE INTO CONVERSATION

20. WOMAN : And you know, the cost of these different contraceptives differs a lot. Have you any idea what you will have to pay?

21. BELLA: Well, I was told the IUD costs a lot upfront. And there are follow-up visits in the first year, but it works out to less than one US dollar a year, if you work it out over 5 years. That's what the leaflet says.
22. WOMAN : Oh! I suppose prices are dropping as more people demand these things, and more clinics make contraception available. My boyfriend and I always used condoms. But now we thought let's try the implant.
23. BELLA: Oh! I didn't know this clinic offered implants.
24. WOMAN : Oh yes, they do! The doctor will put two small implants under the skin in my arm. I'm a bit nervous but my boyfriend, Jordan, over there - he is supporting me!
25. BELLA: That's good. Didn't you like the idea of injectables?
26. WOMAN : Not me personally. But some of my girlfriends come for their injections every three months. The doctors advise using condoms as well, if they have more than

one partner. Jordan and I believe in having only one partner.

27. BELLA: Robert and I are like that. But we will get tested once a year for HIV. I mean, let's be honest - any partner is capable of slipping up, especially at our age. Marriage is no guarantee. It just takes a drop of booze at a party and... I just think we have to be careful these days, don't you?

28. WOMAN: Definitely. And you know, when you're talking about costs, childbirth and children are also very costly! We decided we will only start a family when we have saved enough.

END OF FLASHBACK MUSIC UP AND OUT
INSERT NEW SECTION

NARRATOR: Bella and her sister, Desirée, went on talking while Eric took notes for his research. He was learning a lot about why women prefer certain methods of contraception over others. And why Bella had chosen the IUD. He also noted the value of the husband or partner taking an active interest in the decision. Meanwhile, at his home in Kentown, his sister Lorraine had different problems on her mind. And she was sharing them with her boyfriend, Sazi.

29. SAZI: (Irritated) I knew something was up! How many days have you been feeling like this?

30. LORRAINE: (Upset) Eight days – nine, oh I don't know. I was so sick at Bongo's audition. I've got no idea what he thought! And on my way home I went straight to the pharmacy and bought a home pregnancy test. Last night I tested negative.
31. SAZI: So? What are you worried about, girl?
32. LORRAINE: Because it didn't feel right. I DO feel different. Then I read that a woman can test negative because the hormone levels are changing and increasing by the hour. So this morning I thought, let me take an early morning sample without drinking tea or water first. Just straight.
33. SAZI: And?
34. LORRAINE: I tested positive!
35. SAZI: But yesterday afternoon it was negative and this morning it was positive? Maybe the next test will be negative again!
36. LORRAINE: Here - read the pamphlet!
37. (SFX Paper)

38. SAZI: (Reading) “It is best to collect urine samples containing the highest presence of the pregnancy hormone”. (Changing voice/softer) , blah blah..oh here- (Reading again) “First morning urine is considered the ideal sample, as it contains the most concentrated presence of hormones.” (Normal voice) Ok. So that seems definite. And the test band from this morning?
39. LORRAINE: Yesterday’s was faint but this morning’s was very clear. (sobbing) I’m pregnant Sazi!
40. SAZI: Oh man! How could this happen? You must have missed a pill too many. Why didn’t I listen to my inner voice and use a condom too. Why!
41. MUSIC UP
42. NARRATOR: Desirée, her sister, Bella and Eric were coming to the end of their interview. Eric hoped he could also interview granma about traditional methods of contraception, but when she came in the room he realised this was not going to happen.

Learning by Ear – Family Planning, Episode 8

43. GRANMA: (strict) My children, what are you talking about so earnestly, uh? Eric, you've been here a long time. What is going on?
44. ERIC: Hallo, Granma Linda. It's a research project.
45. GRANMA: What are you researching with my girls? Hey?
46. ERIC: (unsure) Um..well..I'm coming to live in Mtelera and work at the new community clinic. My mum will be running it! And um..
47. GRANMA: And she believes in family planning. But we don't. We in Mtelera want a clinic for our primary health care needs.
48. ERIC: We will provide that. But women want to know...
49. GRANMA (Interrupts) Women want to know what? How to behave like Western women? How to control our African population? This family planning stuff. Bah! It is changing our lives.
50. BELLA: OUR lives, Granma Linda. Yes, Not yours. We want change and we want to BE part

of that change. Ai! Poor Mama (sobbing),
If only she'd had the chance to choose
when she had her babies, she would still
be alive. (wailing) Oh Mama! I never want
to have to go through what you went
through!

51. Sobbing intermittently FADE UNDER

NARRATOR: And holding on to her sister, Desirée rocked her and stroked her hair. This was the first time they had mourned their mother's passing together. Eric and Granma sat silently watching, as Desirée sang her sister to sleep with their mother's favourite song.

OUTRO

And that's all for today from Learning by Ear. You have been listening to "Under the Mango Trees.", a radio drama written by Romie Singh. Please join us for Episode Nine when the fears that Lorraine are harbouring, are revealed and Desirée intensifies the search for her father and uncle. Remember, if you want to hear the programme again or tell friends about the series, please visit our website at: [d world dot de slash 1 b e](http://dworld.de/slash/1be)
Goodbye for now and take care.

END OF EPISODE EIGHT