

Title: Under the Mango Trees

EPISODE 2: What mother said

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Sc.1 At school. Schoolyard ambience.

List of characters:

- Desirée (f, 16)
- Lorraine (f, 18)
- Narrator
- Children in background

Sc. 2 Dreamlike

List of characters:

- Desirée (f, 16)
- April (f, 39)

Sc. 3 In class

List of characters:

- Teacher (f)
- Desirée(f, 16)
- Students in background
- Narrator

Sc. 4 Interior of bus

List of characters:

- Desirée (f, 16)
- Endurance (m, 13)
- Children in background
- Narrator

Sc. 5. Evening ambience

List of characters:

- Desirée (f, 16)
- April (f, 39)
- Narrator

INTRO:

Welcome to *Learning by Ear* and Episode Two of our radio drama series, “Under the Mango Trees” about family planning. In today’s episode Desirée has to help her brother, Endurance, face up to difficulties at school, but she is also told some exciting news by her friend Lorraine about a new TV talent competition coming to the big city of Granville.

NARRATOR: Desirée and Endurance caught the same early morning bus every school day to get to Kentown High School 20 kilometres away from their village Mtelera. By the time they got there, Endurance was usually too tired to enjoy school. His teacher had already complained that he fell asleep in class and smelt of cattle. However, Desirée loved

school and loved singing with Lorraine, her best friend. In every school break they tried out the songs they knew, and even made up a few new ones themselves.

Sc.1 At school. Schoolyard ambience.

1. **SFX:** Background noise of boys and girls.

2. **SFX:** DESIRÉE /LORRAINE Practicing song (fade in)

3. DESIRÉE: (laughing) That sounds great!

4. LORRAINE: We should sing it to Bongo!

5. DESIRÉE: Bongo? Is he round and fat, with a goat skin over his head? (giggling)

6. LORRAINE: Hey! Des! It's just a nickname! He's a great drummer and musician.

7. DESIRÉE: (apologetic) Whoops! Sorry – I had no idea!

8. LORRAINE: Yeah right! But better than that girlfriend, he's young and rich and has just opened

up a new entertainment agency in Kentown. Just down the road from here, The Rainbow Agency.

9. DESIRÉE: Wow!
10. LORRAINE: That's more like it! And he organises the music and sound for all sorts of events; beauty pageants; weddings etc. I've already registered with him as a singer. If a band calls and needs a singer, Bongo will call me to see if I can do it! If you and I get good, we could sing together AND get paid for it!
11. DESIRÉE: What? People might pay to hear us? (laughing) What could we call ourselves? The Hen Sisters?
12. LORRAINE: Yes! OK! So you don't want to know about the regional 'Pop Idols' competition that Bongo's helping to organise, right? OK! Fine!
13. DESIRÉE: Uh? What's Pop Idols?

14. LORRAINE: What? Des! Please! Don't tell me you don't know what that is?
15. DESIRÉE: You forget I live out in Mtelera – we don't even have a television, duh. Does that make you feel better?
16. LORRAINE: OK! OK! I'm sorry! Check this out! Young people come to audition. Each act gets to sing in front of three judges and if they like you, you go through to the next round. If they don't...
17. DESIRÉE: (makes clucking noises) ...they throw us out and tell us to go and cluck somewhere else!
18. LORRAINE: (laughing) Des – You have no idea! The prize is a recording contract and loads of publicity and concerts on television and on stage. We are good! Listen! Come over this weekend to my place. My mum's always asking after you. She loved your mum so much. She would really love to see you.

19. DESIRÉE: Lorraine – you are really serious about this aren't you! Well! I'd love to see Aunty Alice again. I have so many things I want to ask her, about my mother.
20. LORRAINE: (softly) But you won't get too sad, Des, will you? We need to sing, you know, happy songs!
21. DESIRÉE: Just a few answers and then I'll be happy, Lorraine. But Granma's a problem. She'll very strict about the woman's role in the house. She'll say no, I'm sure, because of the children. But maybe my sister Bella can help!
22. LORRAINE: Make sure you sort it! See you on Saturday! We'll sing and you'll get to meet Bongo! I'll phone him and make an appointment for us both to see him, and we can take it from there. Your life begins NOW!
23. SFX: SCHOOL BELL
- There's the bell! Must fly! See you later!

NARRATOR: Desirée went off to class too, but she couldn't concentrate. Her mind went back to her mother who had died only a month before. Why had she died? That was a question she wanted to ask Lorraine's mother who worked at the family planning clinic in Kentown. She was a doctor and had been there at her mother's bedside when she passed away. As she sat staring out of the class window, Desirée recalled a conversation she'd had with her mother, way back, when Desirée first noticed blood on her school dress.

24. **SFX:** MUSIC UP FADE AND HOLD UNDER SCENE

Sc. 2 Dreamlike

25. APRIL: Ah! You mustn't worry Des! The bleeding is a sign that you have changed. You are now producing an egg inside your body.

26. DESIRÉE: (sounds younger) What? Like a chicken?

27. APRIL: (laughing) Almost! Except we only have one egg that grows once a month inside our ovaries and we have two ovaries - left and right. Look!

28. **SFX:** Sound of paper

See? One egg is tucked up there. If it is not fertilised it drops down, down down and goes out – that’s the blood you see every month, Desirée. So, now that you can produce an egg and could actually become a mother- except of course you won’t. But it is the unfertilized egg that your body gets rid of. Then another one grows on the other side a month later and the same thing happens again. And each month there is bleeding.

29. **DESIRÉE:** How does the egg get fel.. um...fet...
30. **APRIL:** (gently) Fertilised. It gets fertilised when the man...
um... oh, this is difficult to explain– look
here’s a picture. You’ve seen your brother
naked, well, one day he will have a wife
and you see this?
31. **SFX:** Sound of paper

This releases sperm- they swim up towards the egg inside the woman and fertilise it. It’s the wonderful story of creation. Now the egg will not drop down because this time as it has been fertilized

and is going to become a baby. So, I know when I miss a period that I am probably pregnant. Doctor Alice tried to tell me about ways of stopping the sperm getting to the egg. But it wasn't approved of.

32. MUSIC OUT

Sc. 3 In class

33. **SFX:** Class room ambiance

34. TEACHER: (off mic) Miss Thomas. Desirée! Wake up! You haven't been listening to a word I've been saying. Stand up!

35. DESIRÉE: (off mic) Yes ma'am?

36. TEACHER: Please hand out these questionnaires. One to each student.

37. **SFX:** Dissenting murmurs. Teacher claps hands for silence

Listen everybody. I want each of you to write down the following. How many members of your family live in your

household? How many are attending school? Any school. What time do the pupils go to bed? Do you do any other kind of work? If so, what and why? For money? Experience? Fun? Just read all the questions carefully and fill in the answers.

38. **DESIRÉE:** What will happen with it ma'am?

39. **SFX:** (Class murmurs: What will happen. This is rubbish. What a stupid idea)

40. **TEACHER:** Shh. The headmaster wants all the teachers to understand your family situation better.

41. **SFX:** (Murmurs, groans)

We need to help your parents and carers to make better pupils out of you.

42. **CLASS:** (Laughter)

43. **SFX:** School bell

Please fill in the forms honestly and bring them back on Monday.

44. **SFX:** Scraping chairs. Children leaving class

45. TEACHER: (off mic) Oh, Desirée. A word please.

46. DESIRÉE: Yes ma'am?

47. TEACHER: Endurance smelt much better in class today!

48. MUSIC UP

NARRATOR: Most of the children at Kentown High School come from the urban areas nearby. So they had already made fun of Endurance's farm life and he certainly didn't need to give them any more excuses to tease him. Desirée was having a hard time persuading him to fill in the questionnaire as they rode home on the bus.

Sc. 4 Interior of bus

49. SFX: FADE IN VOICES AND SFX

50. DESIRÉE: Listen, Miss Davies won't tell the rest of the class what we write. They will never know.

51. ENDURANCE: But they might find out. Then they'll laugh at me.
52. DESIRÉE: Look- if anyone laughs at you, then you ask them, "where do you get your milk, eat and eggs from?"
53. ENDURANCE: (grumpy) They'll say, "from the market."
54. DESIRÉE: (laughing) Well then, silly, they are just joking around. So have a few jokes up your own sleeve! Like this one. How does a farmer count a herd of cows?
55. ENDURANCE (giggling): I don't know! How does a farmer count a herd of cows?
56. DESIRÉE: (laughing) With a cow-culator!
57. **SFX:** groans and giggles
58. ENDURANCE: Oh, oh!

NARRATOR: Laughing helped! But by the time they got home Endurance was too tired even to tell his joke to Uncle Blessing's four children. He was asleep before he had time to fill in the questionnaire or do his homework. Granma was tired too, so Desirée put the children to bed and later, when everyone was fast asleep, she crept out of the house and went into the mango grove, as she did so often, to talk to her mother.

Sc. 5. Evening ambience

59. **SFX:** Wind in the mango trees

60. **DESIRÉE:** Ma? Endurance keeps falling asleep in school. Granma thinks he works too hard and I should take over the farm work and stay at home

61. **APRIL:** Endurance - my little boy. He came too soon. That's why he's weaker. But you mustn't leave school yet, my daughter. Find a way. We need education.

62. **DESIRÉE:** I know ma. You always said you wished that you'd had your children later in life so that you could have finished school first. Bella's thinking of studying again, Ma! She

said she needed to get out of our noisy household. She's living with Robert and doing a correspondance course. She says she doesn't want children yet. Ma? Ma? Have you gone?

63. SFX: Winds in the trees

NARRATOR: Slowly, Desirée left the mango grove and as the moon rose through the trees she found herself singing her mother's favourite song, the one that she had made up herself when she, Bella and Endurance were very small.

64. SFX: Des sings 'signature tune'

OUTRO

And that was all for today from "Under the Mango Trees" a radio drama written by Romie Singh. Please join us soon for Episode Three when Desirée finally gets to ask Doctor Alice how her mother died.

Remember, do tell your friends about Learning by Ear and if you want to hear the programme again please visit our website at [d w world dot d e slash l b e](http://dwworld.de).

Goodbye for now and take care.

END OF EPISODE TWO