

Title: Under the Mango Trees

EPISODE 5: You can decide

Author: Romie Singh

Editors: Susanne Fuchs, Katrin Ogunsade, Maja Braun

Sc. 1 In the kitchen. Early morning ambience

List of characters:

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

Scene 2 At school

List of characters:

- Lorraine (f, 18)
- Desirée (f, 16)
- Narrator

Scene 3 Interior.

List of characters:

- Sazi (m, 20)
- Lorraine (f, 18)
- Narrator

Scene 4 In the kitchen.

List of characters:

- Bella (f, 18)
- Bongo (m, 20+)
- Desirée (f, 16)
- Endurance (m, 13)

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

In today’s episode, Lorraine is wondering about what is going on between her brother, Eric, and her best friend, Desirée. Lorraine, herself, and her boy-friend, Sazi, seem to be in control of their lives, talking freely about their relationship and discussing contraception. Meanwhile, Desirée learns more from her sister, Bella, about her decision not to have children yet. Join us now to find out what is going on for yourself!

SIG.TUNE UP HOLD UNDER AND FADE

1. SFX: Wind

NARRATOR: Mtelera is a small rural village and, on a windy day, the dust from the fields makes Endurance cough more than usual. Desirée gets up early to make him a warm drink.

Sc. 1 In the kitchen. Early morning ambience

2. **SFX:** chickens etc., children playing around, laughing etc.

3. **SFX:** Endurance coughing

4. **DESIRÉE:** Here, Endurance. Drink this. It's just fresh herbs in boiling water.

5. **ENDURANCE:** (Sipping tea) It was great being at Eric's house. I liked Aunty Alice's mango juice, didn't you? With ice too!

6. **DESIRÉE:** (dreamily) Yes, it was... very nice.

7. **ENDURANCE:** It was so quiet. Not like here with all of us kids in this small house. When is Uncle Blessing going to come and take the four small ones back home?

8. **DESIRÉE:** I'm not sure but, yes, I would love a room all to myself!

9. **ENDURANCE:** Me too! But why did Aunty Alice only have two children? Did she get sick after she had the twins? You know, was she punished, Des?

10. **DESIRÉE:** No, of course not. I hope the days are gone when people think that having twins

is some kind of curse! Aunty and Uncle Joshua planned to have a small family. They wanted to go on working as doctors. Having two kids at once made it easier in a way. Aunty Alice could look after them and work part time after just a short baby break.

11. **SFX:** Endurance starts coughing.
 Here! Drink some more while it's hot.

12. **ENDURANCE:** (sipping) So, that's why they live in such a nice house. But Eric did say he that wished he had more brothers and sisters. He said he was a bit lonely sometimes. He showed me his medical books and he had this cool skeleton in his bedroom! I couldn't sleep! I thought it would come alive and get me in the night!

13. **DESIRÉE:** (laughing) It's just bones, silly! I think you should get up now and get ready for school.

14. **MUSIC UP**

NARRATOR: Once at school, Desirée hurried to join Lorraine before lessons began.

Scene 2 At school

15. **SFX:** School break, people talking, laughing etc. In background
16. **LORRAINE:** What have you done to my brother? He came home very late and all dewey-eyed last night!
17. **DESIRÉE:** (laughing) Lorraine, you are TERRIBLE!
18. **LORRAINE:** I know. Ok, tell me another time! Let's just sing one song before we go into class.
19. **SFX:** Lorraine and DESIRÉE sing a new song, laughing, improvising, making mistakes
20. **SFX:** School bell ringing
21. **DESIRÉE:** Oh, no – we have to go in now. Can't we carry on singing after class?
22. **LORRAINE:** (happily excited) Sorry, girlfriend, but I all ready have a date with Sazi after school!

NARRATOR: Sazi was 19 and studying to become chef at a college in Kentown. He loved being able to share his dreams and ambitions with his girl-friend, Lorraine. Every decision they made, they made together. Even deciding to use contraception was a joint decision.

Why should she have to worry on her own about getting pregnant?
And Sazi was certainly interested to hear about all her plans,
especially since her meeting with Bongo.

Scene 3 Interior.

23. **SFX:** Soft music in the background

24. SAZI: So? Does Bongo think you have a good
 chance?

25. LORRAINE: He does. He also liked Desirée's voice
 very much.

26. SAZI: And you? What happens if you win?

27. LORRAINE: I'll be over the moon! People in the
 audience and on TV can vote to keep me
 in or get me out. So it won't be easy to
 win.

28. SAZI: TV! Wow, Lorraine! You're going to be a
 star! I'll get all my friends and family to
 vote for you every single time! Come here,
 you're jumping around like a grasshopper!
 Don't I get to kiss you anymore?

29. LORRAINE : (kissing) You do! Oh, you do!

30. SAZI: (softly) I hope you'll still talk to me after you become famous.
31. LORRAINE: (softly) Don't be silly. I couldn't do this without your support.
32. SAZI: (kissing) I don't have to worry about losing you, then?
33. LORRAINE: No, man! I love you.
34. SAZI: (kissing) Hmm. Have you been taking your pill? Are you still safe?
35. LORRAINE: (kissing) Yes, Sazi. I'm safe...
36. **SFX:** Intimate sounds of breathing and kissing.
37. **MUSIC UP**

NARRATOR: Desirée's elder sister, Bella, had babysat for the weekend when Desirée and Endurance went to Lorraine's and decided to stay one more night. Her boyfriend, Robert, had gone off with his college friends and she didn't fancy being alone. And anyway, it was quite nice having children around again. But why didn't she want any of her own? Desirée decided to ask her.

Scene 4 In the kitchen.

38. **SFX:** washing up.

39. **BELLA:** Why? Because I'm too young. We can't afford a child yet and I want to get my qualifications and work before I settle down to have a child. Why do you ask? Has Granma been talking?

40. **DESIRÉE:** No. I was just curious that's all.

41. **BELLA:** Look Des, you are old enough to know about these things. There's no great mystery to it. A woman today can choose when she wants to have children. Our mother clearly didn't think she could.

42. **DESIRÉE:** I remember Granma took her and Papa to the traditional healer to get her to insert herbs that would stop her having babies.

43. **BELLA:** Yes, I remember that too. It was very painful. She got pregnant anyway, but then miscarried. (Clicking her tongue) Ai! I don't know. I like Aunty Alice's way of explaining what options a woman has. She explained to Ma that she could be sterilised; or she could have an Intrauterine device, an IUD, inserted, you

know, that device that is placed inside to stop the woman getting pregnant. It releases a hormone to stop fertilization of the egg, but unlike the pill you don't have to think about it every day.

44. DESIRÉE: And? I suppose Granma was against all of those possibilities.

45. BELLA: (whispering angrily) Why do you think I left this house? Of course Granma is against all forms of contraception. But I know our mother would still be alive today if she had not got pregnant again. Just a simple operation, free of charge at the government clinic, and that's all she needed. Doctor Alice just had to tie the tubes to stop impregnation. Do you understand what I'm saying, Des?

46. DESIRÉE: I think so. You're talking about a vasectomy, right?

47. BELLA: (laughing) No! That's the operation that the man has, if he decides, 'No more children.' A woman has Fallopian tubes right? The doctor clips the tubes so that afterwards, the eggs can no longer travel down the tubes to the

uterus, and sperm cannot make contact with the eggs. And it's permanent.

48. DESIRÉE: So you have to be absolutely one hundred per cent sure that you will never want a child.

49. BELLA: Yes, or that you have had enough children and you just don't want any more. Maybe you can't afford any more, or your body won't take it.

50. DESIRÉE: It's a big decision.

51. BELLA: Yes, but it's easier for older women, and you know, in some cultures, once a woman becomes a grandmother she is expected to stop having children herself. So that's when many older women get sterilised. But it's also for the mother whose life would be placed in danger by another pregnancy. Our Ma was such a case. That's what makes me so sad.

52. **SFX** Cell ring tone keeps ringing. **SFX** Feet running. Door opens.

53. ENDURANCE: (out of breath) The phone's ringing! Who is it, Des?
54. BELLA: Since when do you guys have a cell phone?
55. DESIRÉE: (excited) Shhh, be quiet both of you.
56. ENDURANCE: (silly voice) Is it your sweetheart, Eric?
57. DESIRÉE: (hissing angrily) Shhh. Endurance. Will you please go out?
58. BELLA: Eric? Ooh, what's cooking, my Sister?
59. DESIRÉE: (excited) I'll tell you later. Please. Let me answer this.
60. ENDURANCE: If it's Eric I want to speak to him too.
61. DESIRÉE : Shhh.
62. SFX: Cell ring stops
Um... hallo? (Louder) Yes, hallo?
63. BONGO: (telephone voice) Desirée? It's me, Bongo. How are you?

64. DESIRÉE: (confused) Bongo? ... Oh! Bongo! Yes. Um... I'm fine. And you?
65. BONGO: More than fine. I've got some interesting news, for your ears only, do you understand?
66. DESIRÉE: (still confused) Er, what do you mean?
67. BONGO: I mean, don't tell anyone else, especially not Lorraine. Not yet. OK?
68. **SFX:** Cell phone line goes dead
69. DESIRÉE: Bongo? (shouting louder) Bongo? Oh no, the line's gone dead.
70. SIG TUNE UP

OUTRO:

Thanks for listening to Learning by Ear. That's all for today's episode of "Under the Mango Trees". Tune in next time for Episode Six when Desirée is faced with a difficult choice. Should she take the opportunity to sing or should she continue looking after the children her uncle left behind. Remember, if you want to listen to the programme again or tell your friends about it, please visit our website at: dwworld.de/lbe. Good-bye until next time.

END OF EPISODE FIVE