

Title: Under the Mango Trees

EPIISODE 1

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Sc.1 Night ambience. Inside the house. April singing*.

List of characters:

- Grandma (f, 60+)
- April (f, 39)
- Desirée (f, 16)

Sc.2 In the bedroom.

List of characters:

- Endurance (m, 13)
- Desirée (f, 16)
- Narrator

Sc.3 Outside in the mango grove

List of characters:

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

Sc.4 Early morning.. In the kitchen.

List of characters:

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

Sc.5 In school yard. Background sound of kids shouting/playing

List of characters:

- Desirée (f, 16)
- Teacher (f)
- Lorraine (f, 18)
- Students in background

Sc. 6 At home.

List of characters:

- Grandma (f, 60+)
- Desirée (f, 16)
- Narrator

INTRO

Welcome to *Learning by Ear* and Episode One of our new 10–part radio drama series, “Under the Mango Trees”, which looks at family planning and how people, particularly teenagers, can protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections using the various contraceptive methods available.

In today’s episode we meet Desirée, whose mother, April, died during childbirth. Desirée is now struggling with being the mother of five young children. She must also cope with her Granma’s rather traditional attitude to the role of women in the family. Find out what makes this young 16–year-old angry and what makes her happy as we listen to Episode One of “Under the Mango Trees”.

***SIG.TUNE The song April sings is the one Desirée sings and should be the signature tune. HOLD UNDER 5-8 secs. AND FADE**

NARRATOR: It’s three o’clock in the morning. The fields are quiet, the mango trees by the small farmhouse are still. The people of Mtelera are fast asleep. Only one woman is tossing and turning as she dreams.

Sc.1 Night ambience. Inside the house. April singing*.

1. GRANMA: (gently) There my darling April – put this shawl around you while you feed your little baby.
2. APRIL: (stops singing) Thank you mother. (screaming) Ohh – Ohh. Haaah.

3. GRANMA: (panicking in sleep) April, no, no! God help me. April, my daughter.
4. DESIRÉE: (breathless) Granma Linda! Wake up! Wake up!
5. GRANMA: (waking up) Uh? What?
6. DESIRÉE: You were having a nightmare.
7. GRANMA: (in panic) April! Where is she? (sobbing) Oh, my daughter!
8. DESIRÉE: (gently) Shhh. Go to sleep. Mama's at rest now. Go to sleep, Granma.
9. SFX: Sobbing dies down.

Sc.2 In the bedroom.

10. SFX Crickets chirping outside. Door opens, closes. Endurance is crying softly.
11. ENDURANCE: (**Frightened**) Des? Why was Granma screaming? What's wrong?
12. DESIRÉE: (**Sigh**) She was dreaming about our Mama – she was having a nightmare. Go back to sleep.

13. ENDURANCE: Is Mama a ghost?
14. DESIRÉE: No, Endurance, she's a spirit and she is unhappy at the way she left us.
15. ENDURANCE: (sniffing) Me, too. And Papa? Why did he leave us?
16. DESIRÉE: Papa will come back for us soon.
17. ENDURANCE: (calmer) Why does Mama make Granma scream?
18. DESIRÉE: Granma is in pain. She lost her daughter when we lost our mother.
19. ENDURANCE: (sniffing) Why did Mama die? Did we make too much noise? Did we drive our Papa away too?
20. DESIRÉE: Shh, Endurance – I don't know why she died, but it wasn't anything that we did. And you know why Papa left. He told us he wanted to find a job. The farm wasn't bringing him in enough money.
21. ENDURANCE: (sleepy) He's in Granville. He promised he will come and get us soon.

22. DESIRÉE: (humming softly the song her mother sang) Shhh. Let's sleep now. We have to get up early. Good night!

23. SFX: MUSIC UP dream-like atmosphere.

NARRATOR: Endurance fell into a deep sleep, and Desirée drifted off into a dream that she often had these days - under the mango trees, talking to her mother.

Sc.3 Outside in the mango grove

SFX: Wind in the trees.

24. DESIRÉE: (softly) Ei! Why are there so many trees?

25. APRIL: (with echo) Each one stands for a death in our family- each one bearing fruit. Yet, I can no longer bear fruit – no more children.

26. DESIRÉE: But you have us, Ma!

27. APRIL: (with echo) Ai, my beautiful children! My darling Bella is already a lady! And you sweet Des, you stay young and innocent for as long as you can. Please help my boy, Endurance, to become a gentleman, one who will respect all women!
(echo) Your life is your life.

28. **DESIRÉE:** I will Ma. - Ma? I want to be a singer. Do you think I can be? Ma? (Sadly) Oh! She's gone.

29. **SFX:** MUSIC UP and OUT.

30. **SFX** Cock crows. Cooking noises, boiling kettle, sizzling. Fade under.

NARRATOR (brighter voice): Desirée was only 16, but the day always started with her getting her four nephews and nieces washed and dressed. They were her Uncle Blessing's children. He left them with Granma Linda when his wife died. The children had been sad since their mother's death.

31. **SFX:** Children playing around (fade in)

But slowly happiness was coming back, with the sound of four young children scampering around. Only Endurance seemed to be grumpy.

Sc.4 Early morning. In the kitchen.

32. **SFX:** Distant cock crows. Wood stove. Children playing around in the background, coming to table.

33. **DESIRÉE:** Wash your hands before you sit down to eat, Endurance.

34. **ENDURANCE:** (upset) My hands are clean. Pass me the milk.

35. DESIRÉE: Endurance, just wait. You don't have to be first with everything.
36. ENDURANCE: I just herded the cattle as I do every morning. You only milked two cows.
37. DESIRÉE: Three!
38. ENDURANCE: And the tea? Des? Pour me some.
39. DESIRÉE: Now that's enough Endurance! You may be the male here, but you are still the youngest! Show some respect.
40. ENDURANCE: Papa said men get served first.
41. DESIRÉE: No, he didn't. Anyway, I'm the man now!
42. ENDURANCE: You wish! You don't wear the trousers. I do!
43. DESIRÉE: I'm the man AND the woman. I look after you all. But I agree that now you are thirteen, you are old enough to do some things on your own. The tea's on the stove. The toast is on the grill! Help yourself! I've got the other children to get washed and dressed.

44. ENDURANCE: (protesting) But I'm not supposed to make my own breakfast!
45. DESIRÉE: (off mic) And we've only got 15 minutes before the bus comes.
46. NARRATOR: At school, Desirée had fun with her friend, Lorraine. Lorraine was her best friend – and both girls shared one big passion: singing!
47. SFX: Suggested lyrics for improvisation: Play with it. Have fun!

*We are the children, the new generation, the next of kin. We talk we sing
We carry the words forward that our elders taught us, we take from you
but we add our own.*

*We talk our talk and walk our walk and though we don't want to break the
chain*

*We do want to add our names and make our mark to make our own hall
of fame.*

Refrain: Value your children, the line of descent to the line of ascent.

Past and present. Etc.

Sc.5 In school yard. Background sound of kids shouting/playing

48. LORRAINE/DES: (Improvisation) Practising the song together.
49. TEACHER: (off mic) Desirée Thomas?

50. DESIRÉE: (on mic) Ssh, Lorraine! Miss David's coming. (off mic)
Yes, ma'am?
51. LORRAINE: What? The bat from hell?
52. DESIRÉE: (giggling) Shh-she can't help it if she has round ears!
53. TEACHER: (on mic) Your brother Endurance fell asleep in my
class today. And he stank of cows. He will be
sent home if he comes to school like that
again. I will have to write a letter of complaint
to your parents.
54. DESIRÉE: (proudly) Parents? I am his parents. Then you had
better write it to me.
55. TEACHER: (confused) Uh? Are you being cheeky?
56. DESIRÉE: (proudly) No, ma'am. It's the truth! Our mother died
four weeks ago. I am 16 and responsible for
my brother – together with my Granma.
57. TEACHER: Right. Well, I'm sorry to hear about your
mother. Um, well, please get him to bed
earlier. And make sure that he washes. The
other teachers are complaining too.
58. SFX: Footsteps leaving

59. DESIRÉE: (angry) Oh, how horrible she is. She comes from the town and has no idea how we live. She doesn't have a clue.
60. LORRAINE: (calm) Come girlfriend! Don't get upset. She is a teacher. She is responsible for making Endurance do his his school work. It's her job to say something. Now come on – we have one more verse to sing! We had a wonderful rap going till we were interrupted! What note were you singing?? (Singing)

61. CROSS FADE SINGING WITH CONVERSATION

Sc. 6 At home.

62. SFX: Evening ambience. Interior. FADE IN DIALOGUE
63. GRANMA: Well, if that's what the teachers think, then you must stop going to school, Desirée, and take more care of Endurance and the other children. You have had ten years of schooling. Let Endurance get his fair share and you take over the farm work. That's what I had to do. In fact I only got to 8th grade.

- 64. DESIRÉE:** I'm sorry, Granma, but I'm sure Mama wanted us all to have a good education. She always wanted me to stay on at school. But ... I will think about how we can share the work out more equally.
- 65. GRANMA: (grumpy)** Equally! Pah! Where does all this equal nonsense get you? We must not lose our culture, Desirée. April was a good mother. You should follow her example.
- 66. DESIRÉE:** I know, Granma, but my mother said she regretted leaving school so early to get married so young.
- 67. GRANMA:** But she did as she was told. We chose Babu because he was a successful farmer. He has fallen on hard times now, but he was a good husband to her. He provided for her. She had no worries.
- 68. DESIRÉE: (with emphasis)** She had six children and lost three. That's a high price to pay.
- 69. GRANMA:** It was God's will. He has a plan for us all, my child, which we must not question.
- 70. DESIRÉE: (grumpy)** In school, we are taught to question.

71. GRANMA: God reveals to us what we should know, my dear.

72. SFX: SOFT EVOCATIVE MUSIC WITH CHOIR. FADE UNDER NEXT SCENE

NARRATOR: When Desirée felt angry and alone she would go down to the garden where she always found peace - under the mango trees. They often appeared to her in her dreams too. Each tree seemed to represent one of her ancestors, a life that had passed on. The wind in the leaves seemed to whisper to her – “your life is your life. Your life is your life”.

73. SFX: MUSIC UP (Des singing a soft song which is the signature tune: See attachment)

OUTRO

And that’s all from “Under the Mango Trees” for today. The story was written by Romie Singh. Please join us for Episode Two when Desirée hears about an exciting TV talent competition coming to their region. Remember, if you want to hear the programme again or tell friends about it, please visit our website at dwworld.de/lbe. Good-bye until next time.

END OF EPISODE ONE