

Learning by Ear 2013

Crossroads Generation - Facing Tough Choices

EPISODE TWO: Clash of Two Classes

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List of characters by scene:

SCENE 1: MERCY GOES TO BONGO ACADEMY

- **MERCY (F, 15)**
- **GUARD (M, 55)**
- **JUMBE (M, 45)**

SCENE 2: MSOTO RECEIVES A CALL FROM HIS SISTER LENA, WHO LIVES ABROAD

- **MSOTO (M, 45)**
- **LENA (F, 40)**

SCENE 3: MERCY AT PRINCIPAL JULIETTE'S OFFICE

- **PRINCIPAL JULIETTE (F, 50)**
- **MERCY (M, 15)**
- **NIKI (M, 16)**
- **JUMBE (M, 45)**

SCENE 4: MSOTO AT HOME WITH HIS WIFE LULU

- **LULU (F, 40)**
- **MSOTO (M, 45)**
- **MERCY (F, 15)**

1. **INTRO - NARRATOR:**

Hello and welcome to "Crossroads Generation", a new entertaining and educational radio novella brought to you by DW's Learning by Ear. In the last episode we met our three young heroes for the first time. Let's catch up...

16-year-old Niki Jumbe went shopping with his mum to buy all the school supplies he needs for his first year at Bongo Academy high school. An exciting day – especially for his mother:

2. **MRS. JUMBE (EP 01, LINE 42):** "My son at Bongo Academy... Mmm, I can't wait to see my friends and brag about you!"

3. **NIKI (EP 01, LINE 43):** "Muuuum..."

Meanwhile Dan Kanyama had his first meeting with the school's principal, Juliette. It was a rather cold welcome to his new home country:

4. **JULIETTE (EP 01, LINE 61):** "And you're not a resident of this country, am I right?"

5. **DAN (EP 01, LINE 62):** "Correct. I am from Laboria." [...]

6. **JULIETTE (EP 01, LINE 63):** "Aha. And do you have the school tuition fees?"

For Mercy Msoto, it started off as the best day of her life when she found out she'd been awarded a scholarship to Bongo Academy, the most prestigious school in the country. But her parents didn't share her happiness. Later that evening she overheard a conversation between them:

Learning by Ear 2013 “Crossroads Generation – Facing Tough Choices”- Episode 2

7. **MSOTO (EP 01, LINE 72):** [...] "Mercy is now fifteen years old. She's ripe and ready to become someone's wife. Besides, think about the dowry we'll get!"
8. **LULU (EP 01, LINE 71):** "No, Msoto! We can't do that to Mercy."
9. **MSOTO (EP 01, LINE 76):** "Lulu, I have decided!"

Make yourself comfortable now as we listen to the second episode, entitled "Clash of Two Classes". After listening silently to the conversation between her parents last night, Mercy knew there was only one thing to do. Very early in the morning, she crept out of the house and made her way straight to Bongo Academy,

SCENE 1: MERCY GOES TO BONGO ACADEMY

10. **ATMO: BONGO HIGH OUTSIDE (NO BREAKTIME), TRAFFIC IN BACKGROUND**
11. **MERCY:** (pleading with security guard) Please, you have to let me in! Look - I've told you the truth - I've been admitted to Bongo Academy. Here's the letter, you can read it yourself!
12. **GUARD:** (strong African accent, faulty grammar) Young girl, are you trying to make out of me a fool?
13. **MERCY:** I beg your pardon?
14. **GUARD:** Who says I can read? I have told you a hundred times. I will not let you in until you come with your parents.
15. **SFX: CAR ARRIVES NEXT TO THEM, HONKS THE HORN**
16. **MERCY:** Please, I just want to see the Principal! That's all I'm asking.
17. **GUARD:** Can step aside. You interrupt my duties.
18. **SFX: CAR WINDOW TURNED DOWN**

19. **JUMBE:** **(shouts from car)** Hey, Guard! What's wrong with you? Hurry up and open this gate! **(to Niki)** Niki, my son, look at this watchman. He's worse than that drunken guard of ours, Msoto. I mean, just look at this – he's brought his daughter to work with him, and now they're having a nice little chat about goodness knows what!
20. **GUARD:** Excuse me, Mister. Can help you?
21. **JUMBE:** **(discussion in the background, under Mercy thinking aloud)** We're here to see the Principal.
22. **GUARD:** Can see your admission letter, Mister?
23. **JUMBE:** **(shouting out of the car window)** Of course we have an admission letter. Do you think we would come without an admission letter? Just open the gate, man!
24. **MERCY:** **(thinking aloud while Guard and Jumbe discuss)** Huh! What did these rich people do to deserve such an easy life? **(wakes up)** Oh - this is my last chance! I'll wait for the guard to open the gate and then rush in. If I don't, he'll never allow me to enter!
25. **GUARD:** Okay, please pass, Mister. I'll open the gate for you.
26. **SFX: IRON GATE BEING OPENED BY HAND**
27. **SFX STEPS: MERCY RUNS IN**

28. **GUARD:** (shouts) Hey! You! Young girl! Stop! (to himself) Oh damn - I can't leave the gate open! (shouting again)
Stop that girl! Stop her!
29. **SFX: CAR DRIVES IN**
30. **SFX: IRON GATE CLOSING QUICKLY**
31. **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

SCENE 2: MSOTO RECEIVES A CALL FROM HIS SISTER LENA, WHO LIVES ABROAD

32. **MORNING ATMO IN THE CITY, LIGHT TRAFFIC**
33. **SFX: MOBILE PHONE RINGING**
34. **MSOTO:** (answers call) Hello?
35. **LENA:** (on the phone) Hello, Msoto, my brother, can you talk? - What am I saying? Of course you can talk, you can always talk. (laughs out loud)
36. **MSOTO:** Lena, you should have more respect for my job. I am a watchman.
37. **LENA:** Exactly! You just sit there for hours and hours, watching men go about their business. So is your boss around?

38. **MSOTO:** No. He’s taking his son to his new school. He has a boy about the same age as my daughter Mercy. Lena, what’s going on? I haven't heard from you since you took Kadu and Banda with you.

39. **LENA:** Relax, brother. All is well. Your two handsome boys are in good hands. Listen, I’ve sent you some money. If you go to the post office with your ID as usual, you should be able to pick it up.

40. **MSOTO:** Oh, Lena. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your help, sister.

KW BEGIN

41. **LENA:** No problem. We’re family, after all. Talking of family, how are the others doing? When is Lulu going to have the baby?

42. **MSOTO:** **(with resignation)** My family is the same. Mercy is growing up and causing so much trouble now. Lulu, my wife... well, what can I say. She just keeps on getting pregnant.

43. **LENA:** **(chuckling)** Oh, come on now, Msoto. Lulu doesn’t get pregnant all by herself. It takes two to tango, remember...

44. **MSOTO:** Yeah, fine, whatever.

KW END

Learning by Ear 2013 “Crossroads Generation – Facing Tough Choices”- Episode 2

45. **LENA:** Oh, come on, my brother...
46. **MSOTO:** Lena, is it possible to talk to my boys?
47. **LENA:** **(annoyed)** Msoto! We talked about this before, didn't we? Kadu and Banda need time to adjust. You know: new country, new school, new language, and everything. It's better if you don't talk to them for a while. It'll only make them homesick.
48. **MSOTO:** **(politely)** Yes, okay, I understand, Lena... but...
49. **SFX: CALL SUDDENLY ENDED**
50. **MSOTO:** Hello! Hello! Lena... Lena, are you still there? Hello?
(sighs)
51. **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

SCENE 3: MERCY AT PRINCIPAL JULIETTE'S OFFICE

52. **SFX: OFFICE AMBIENCE**

53. **PRINCIPAL JULIETTE:** Mercy, this is terrible! Are you absolutely sure that what you've just told me about your father's plan is really true? Because you realize of course that I'll have to talk to him about it.

54. **MERCY:** It's the whole truth, Madam Principal. My father would rather marry me off than see me come to Bongo Academy! I heard him last night - he was making this very clear to my mum. They thought I was asleep, but I wasn't. **(almost breaking down in tears)** It was supposed to be the best day of my life, but my father turned it into the worst. I was crying all night. I didn't know what to do.

55. **JULIETTE:** All right, Mercy. Listen. I'm going to make an exception for you. You seem very eager to get an education, and who am I to stand in your way? I'm not going to deny you that opportunity. You can start school without a school uniform. Come in your home clothes until your parents can afford to buy you one.

56. **MERCY:** (trying to control her emotions) Madam Juliette! I... I...
Thank you so much... What can I say? I promise I'll do my very best! You won't regret this!
57. **JULIETTE:** I hope not, Mercy. I'll take you at your word. As I said, this is very much an exception, and I'm sure it will be raised at the meeting of the school board, but I'm ready to defend my decision. I still need to see and talk to your father, though. Tell him to come and see me tomorrow.
58. **MERCY:** Okay, I will. Thanks again. But – Madam Principal, how do I even begin to tell him? He'll skin me alive if he finds out that I came to talk to you.
59. **JULIETTE:** Don't worry. I'll write this down for you.
60. **SFX: PEN SCRIBBLING ON PAPER**
61. **SFX: PAPER HANDED OVER**
62. **JULIETTE:** Just give your father this note. That should be enough.
63. **MERCY:** Thank you again, Madam. So that means I can start school already?
64. **JULIETTE:** Yes, Mercy. Welcome to Bongo Academy! But I'm afraid I have to ask you to leave now; I'm expecting some other guests.
65. **SFX: STEPS - MERCY LEAVING FAST**
66. **SFX: DOOR OPENS**

KW BEGIN

67. **SFX: TWO PEOPLE BUMP INTO EACH OTHER**

68. **MERCY/NIKI: (simultaneously)** Oh – sorry!

69. **JUMBE:** **(angry)** Hey, watch where you’re going!

70. **MERCY:** I’m so sorry. I didn't see you.

71. **NIKI:** Dad, it was *my* fault! I should have been watching where I was going.

72. **JUMBE:** Don't apologize, Niki. **(realizing who Mercy is)** Hey - you? Aren't you the girl we saw at the gate? Why were you running after my car? And what are you doing here? Should you even be here?

73. **NIKI:** Dad, stop it, please! **(to Mercy)** I’m sorry...

74. **JULIETTE:** **(Calls out)** Next, please!

KW END

75. **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

SCENE 4: MSOTO AT HOME WITH HIS WIFE LULU

76. **EVENING ATMO IN THE SLUMS**

77. **SFX: DRINK BEING OPENED**

78. **LULU:** Okay. Are you going to tell me where you got the money for all this? You come home with so much alcohol, and in the middle of the month... Help me out here, Msoto, because it makes no sense. Did you rob a bank?

79. **MSOTO:** **(indifferent, sips from bottle)** Is that what you think of me, Lulu?

80. **LULU:** I'm surprised the police haven't come knocking on our door yet. Where did you get the money, Msoto?

81. **MSOTO:** Why do you always have to be so negative?

82. **LULU:** **(bitter)** Because our life is negative! It's filled with negatives, from morning till night! Are we going to be able to eat breakfast? How about lunch? Supper? We're having another baby – what will it eat, drink, wear? Oh, and how could I forget – the rent hasn't been paid, either.

83. **MSOTO:** **(pretends to snore)** Have you finished complaining? Because that's certainly what you do best. **(angry)** Where's Mercy? Shouldn't she be home by now?

84. **LULU:** Mercy was here already. She’s gone to buy water for cooking and bathing. She left this note for you, said you should read it.
85. **MSOTO:** **(not pleased)** Another letter? What's with all these letters and notes? I’m too tired. I’ll read it later.
86. **LULU:** **(still insisting)** Msoto, where did you get money? Have you already found a husband for Mercy? Have they given you money for her dowry? Is that what this is? Who is he?
87. **MSOTO:** **(chuckles sheepishly)** Hahahaha... It’s true what they say about women. You really are from another planet!
88. **SFX: IRON SHEET DOOR OPENING**
89. **LULU:** Mercy, there you are!
90. **MERCY:** **(panting from exhaustion)** Water prices have gone up!
91. **SFX: WATER CANS DROPPED ON THE FLOOR**
92. **MSOTO:** **(furious)** Water prices up! Food prices up! Rent going up! Everything up, up, up! Only my salary stays the same!
93. **MERCY:** **(hesitating)** Dad, there’s something else I need to tell you...
94. **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

95. **OUTRO - NARRATOR:**

And that brings us to the end of the second episode of our story, “Crossroads Generation”, a new Learning by Ear radio drama brought to you by DW. Is Msoto going to read the note from Mercy's teacher? And what awaits Niki, Dan and Mercy on their first day at Bongo Academy? Catch the next episode right here to find out. And if you don't want to wait till then for more, you can visit our web page, dw.de/lbe, or like us on Facebook. There you'll find more audio, videos, and lots of free downloads. Until next time – take care.