

## **Learning by Ear 2014**

### **Crossroads Generation – Season 4: Facing New Challenges**

#### **EPISODE FIFTEEN: It Is Possible!**

AUTHOR: JAMES MUHANDO

EDITORS: JULIA MAAS, MAJA BRAUN

COPY EDITOR: CHARLOTTE COLLINS

**List of characters by scene:**

**INTRO/OUTRO: NARRATOR**

**SCENE 1: MERCY VISITS THE DOCTOR**

- MERCY - F 19
- DR. FLORENCE - F 40s

**SCENE 2: SAMA AND NONI BEG FOR ALMS**

- SAMA - F 12
- NONI – F 15
- VOICE - M ADULT
- MADAM - F ADULT
- ANITA - F 19
- PAULO - M 40s

**SCENE 3: MERCY HAS A HAPPY SURPRISE FOR NIKI**

- MERCY - F 19
- NIKI - M 19

**SCENE 4: PAULO ARRESTED**

- PAULO - M 40s
- ANITA - F 19
- MRS. MORGAN - F 40s
- OFFICER - M ADULT

## **INTRO:**

1. **NARRATOR:** Hello and welcome back to Crossroads Generation, our ongoing radio novella about the challenges facing a group of African teenagers. We are on the fifteenth episode entitled “It Is Possible!” In the last episode, Paulo’s landlord came by and demanded that he either pay the rent or leave. After this, Paulo asked his daughters Sama and Noni to go out with him:

## **2. FLASHBACK: EPISODE 14, LINES 102-106**

***PAULO:** (...) Sama, I’m sorry to have to ask you this, but I think you and your sister Noni can help.*

***SAMA:** How?*

***PAULO:** You’re always wanting to take your sister out, aren’t you?*

***SAMA:** Yes.*

***PAULO:** Okay, then - put on your jacket and fetch your sister. We’re going out.*

3. **NARRATOR:** This is pretty astonishing, because Paulo never wants his disabled daughter Noni to leave the house! He also refused Anita’s help when she suggested he send his daughters to a special school. So where is Paulo taking the two sisters? On the other side of town, Mercy and Niki are keen to have a baby, even though Niki is HIV positive. Their counsellor, Margaret, had some good news for the two of them:

**4. FLASHBACK: EPISODE 10, LINES 62-64**

***MARGARET:** What if I told you that under certain conditions it is possible to have a child with an infected person and remain uninfected?*

***NIKI: (SURPRISED)** It is?*

***MERCY:** Really? Someone did tell me that, but I didn't believe them.*

**5. NARRATOR:** Well, Margaret says it is possible. Let's join Mercy as she talks to a specialist about it.

**SCENE 1: MERCY VISITS THE DOCTOR**

**6. ATMO: HOSPITAL ATMO**

**7. DR. FLORENCE:** So, you're Mercy Maso...

**8. MERCY:** Msoto-Jumbe...

**9. DR. FLORENCE:** Yes, sorry - Mercy Msoto-Jumbe. Well, now.

Counsellor Margaret mentioned that you wanted to see me to find out whether you and your husband would be able to have a baby safely.

**10. MERCY:** Yes, Doctor Florence.

11. **DR. FLORENCE:** Right. What she didn't tell me is which of you is HIV positive.
12. **MERCY:** My husband.
13. **DR. FLORENCE:** But you're not?
14. **MERCY:** No, Doctor.
15. **DR. FLORENCE:** I see. So you're a discordant couple...
16. **MERCY:** Sorry doctor, discor... what?
17. **DR. FLORENCE:** A discordant couple is two people in an ongoing relationship, in which one partner is HIV-infected and the other is not. We also call it a mixed-status relationship.
18. **MERCY:** Oh, I see. Well, Niki and I have always used protection when we have sex, to make sure I don't get infected. But now we feel we'd like to have a baby.

***Flashback Ep. 16, line 4***

19. **DR. FLORENCE:** Ah. And you wanted to know whether it's possible to have a child with him - safely?

20. **MERCY:** Yes, Doctor.

21. **DR. FLORENCE:** **(THOUGHTFULLY)** Hmm! That's a very natural wish for a young married couple. You've done exactly the right thing, coming to discuss this before trying to conceive, Mercy. But tell me, where is he? Your husband, I mean?

22. **MERCY:** I didn't want him to come with me in case I got his hopes up for nothing!

23. **DR. FLORENCE:** **(THOUGHTFULLY)** I see. Well, I may be able to help you, if you're quite sure you know what you're getting yourselves into. But you need to come and see me together.

24. **MERCY:** So are you saying it's possible?

25. **DR. FLORENCE:** Yes. The risk of passing on the virus is still there, but with the right treatment, we can minimize it almost to zero percent. That's why I said you must find time to come in with your husband. I'll explain everything to both of you then. It's quite a complex process.

26. **MERCY:** Thank you so much, Doctor Florence!
27. **DR. FLORENCE:** No, no - thank me when it's done!

*Musical interlude*

**SCENE 2: SAMA AND NONI BEG FOR ALMS**

28. **ATMO: STREET ATMO, TRAFFIC AND PEOPLE PASSING**
29. **SFX: COINS JINGLE IN PLASTIC BOWL**
30. **SAMA:** Some change for food! Please help us! My sister  
and I are orphans.
31. **NONI:** **(LAUGHS)** Chain bad!

***KW BEGIN***

32. **VOICE:** Here you are, young girl!
33. **SFX: COINS DROPPED INTO BOWL**
34. **SAMA:** Thank you, sir!
35. **NONI: LAUGHS SHEEPISHLY**
36. **VOICE:** You're welcome!
37. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS WALKING AWAY**

**KW END**

38. **SAMA:** Help! Please help! Madam, hungry, please help!
39. **MADAM:** Go away, you lazy parasites! Why don't you work like everybody else?
40. **SAMA:** We're orphans.
41. **MADAM:** Hm! We all have crosses to bear!
42. **NONI:** **LAUGHS HAPPILY**
43. **ANITA:** Noni? Sama?! What are you doing here on the street?
44. **SAMA:** **(WHISPERS URGENTLY)** Anita! Thank God! Please help us. My dad has gone crazy! He's forcing us to beg for money from strangers!
45. **ANITA:** What?! Why would he do that?
46. **SAMA:** He says we only have to help him for a short time. Until he gets a job!
47. **ANITA:** But this is wrong! How long have you been doing this?
48. **SAMA:** Yesterday and today.

49. **ANITA:** This is completely unacceptable! I can't allow this to happen!
50. **SAMA:** **(SCARED)** Oh my God! Here he comes! Please go before he sees you!
51. **ANITA:** No, I have to talk to him. I can't let this go on!
52. **SAMA:** No! No! Please go, or I'll be in trouble!
53. **ANITA:** Okay, I'm going. But I'll be back, with the police!
54. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS GOING AWAY**
55. **SAMA:** **(PRETENDS)** Thank you very much, madam. Help! Help, my sister needs to go to hospital, help...
56. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS ARRIVING**
57. **PAULO:** **(WHISPERS ANGRILY)** Sama! What did I tell you about talking to that woman Anita?
58. **SAMA:** I didn't talk to her. She just gave me some money.
59. **PAULO:** Don't lie to me, girl! Do you think I don't remember that trouble-maker?
60. **SAMA:** I'm sorry, Dad!
61. **PAULO:** Stop being sorry and get back to work!



62. **SAMA:** Yes, Dad!

***Musical interlude***

**SCENE 3: MERCY HAS A HAPPY SURPRISE FOR NIKI**

63. **ATMO:** QUIETER NEIGHBOURHOOD, EVENING

64. **SFX:** FOOTSTEPS

65. **MERCY:** **(SIGHS)** Home at last! I can't wait to see Niki's face  
when I tell him the news.

66. **SFX:** KEY JINGLES, DOOR OPENING

67. **SFX:** FOOTSTEPS WALKING IN

68. **MERCY:** Why is it so dark? Niki's always home by now --

69. **NIKI:** Surprise!

70. **SFX:** LIGHT SWITCHED ON

71. **MERCY:** **(GASPS)** Niki! You scared me!

72. **NIKI:** **(SMILING)** Sorry, Mercy. I didn't mean to.

73. **MERCY:** What's all this? You made dinner?

74. **NIKI:** Yes. I wanted to thank you.

75. **MERCY:** For what?
76. **NIKI:** For being such a special girl, and the best wife and friend a man could ever ask for.
77. **MERCY:** Oh, Niki! It's a nice surprise, but you really didn't have to!
78. **NIKI:** Oh yes, I had to. Here, sit down.
79. **SFX: CHAIR SCRAPING ON THE FLOOR**
80. **MERCY:** **(CHUCKLES)** Come on, Niki, you don't need to trouble yourself...
81. **NIKI:** Shh! Sit and eat.
82. **SFX: CUTLERY, SOUP POURED INTO PLATES**
83. **NIKI:** Here we go - soup is served. Your very own professional chef is in charge this evening. And the chef says you're just to sit back and enjoy your food.
84. **MERCY:** **(LAUGHS)** Oh Niki, you're so sweet!
85. **NIKI: LAUGHS**
86. **SFX: SPOONS ON PLATES AS THEY EAT**
87. **MERCY:** **(SIPS)** Mmm! The soup's delicious!

88. **NIKI:** Told you! Professional chef!
89. **MERCY:** Stop bragging!
90. **NIKI: LAUGHS**
91. **MERCY:** I have a surprise for you, too.
92. **NIKI:** Really? What?
93. **MERCY:** I don't want to raise your hopes too much, but I saw the doctor today....
94. **NIKI:** The doctor? What for?
95. **MERCY:** I wanted to find out whether it *really* is possible for people like us to have a child without passing on the virus.
96. **NIKI:** Oh? And?
97. **MERCY:** She said yes, it is possible!
98. **NIKI:** **(EXCITED)** Oh my God! Really?
99. **MERCY:** Don't get too excited. She also said it's a long and difficult process. And I still haven't decided yet.
100. **NIKI:** Why didn't you tell me?

101. **MERCY:** I didn't want to raise your hopes only to be told it wasn't possible after all. We have an appointment with her tomorrow.

102. **NIKI:** **(KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK)** Oh Mercy - I do really love you. Very much!

***Musical interlude***

**SCENE 4: PAULO ARRESTED**

103. **ATMO: SLUM, EVENING**

104. **SFX: SOMEONE HAMMERING NAIL INTO CORRUGATED IRON SHEET**

105. **PAULO:** **(TO HIMSELF)** Damn! Is there a single place in this house that doesn't leak when it rains? And the landlord refuses to even talk about repairing it. All he cares about is raking in the rent.

106. **SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR**

107. **PAULO:** Who the hell is it now?

108. **SFX: PERSISTENT KNOCKING**

109. **PAULO:** **(CALLS)** All right! All right, I'm coming!

**110. SFX: SOMEONE JUMPING FROM LOW LADDER**

**111. SFX: FOOTSTEPS**

**112. SFX: DOOR OPENING**

**113. PAULO:** Anita? What are you doing here? I told you to stay away from my family!

**114. ANITA:** Hello, Paulo. I'm sorry we if we're disturbing you, but we have to talk to you about Noni and Sama.

**115. PAULO:** We? Who's we?

**116. MRS. MORGAN:** Me. I've come with her.

**117. PAULO:** And who are you?

**118. MRS. MORGAN:** My name is Mrs. Morgan. I work with the child welfare department. We need to talk to you about your daughters, Noni and Sama.

**119. PAULO:** Why would you want to talk to me about my daughters?

**120. MRS. MORGAN:** Paulo, my department has reliable information that you keep your disabled daughter chained to her bed, and that you've been forcing her and her sister to beg on the streets. This contravenes the Children and Disabled People's Act.

**121. PAULO:** **(SARCASTIC)** And who was it who gave you that 'reliable' information? This snooping woman right here, I suppose? Let me give you a word of advice, Mrs. Morgan, or whatever your name is. This is MY house, and Noni and Sama are MY children. What happens in MY house is none of your business! Now if you don't mind, I was in the middle of repairing my roof.

**122. ANITA:** Paulo, please! Just hear her out. All we want is to help Noni and Sama get an education.

**123. PAULO:** They are my burden. MY burden, you hear?

124. **MRS. MORGAN:** Paulo, we're here to try and resolve this amicably. We need to find out if there's some way we can help you. But if you refuse to accept our help, we'll be forced to take action against you.

125. **PAULO:** **(LAUGHS, SARCASTIC)** Oh, really? You and whose army?

126. **MRS. MORGAN:** I was afraid you'd be difficult. That's why I brought the police along. **(CALLS)** Officer?

127. **OFFICER:** Yes, madam!

***Flashback Ep. 16, line 2***

128. **MRS. MORGAN:** Please arrest this man. And find his daughters - we'll take them with us.

129. **OFFICER:** Paulo, you are under arrest for using your children to solicit for money, and for obstructing justice. Put your hands together, please - I'm going to have to handcuff you.

130. **SFX: HANDCUFFS JINGLE**

131. **PAULO:** What are you doing? You can't arrest me!

**132. OFFICER:** Yes, I can, and I will. Put your hands --

**133. SFX: COMMOTION AS SOMEONE IS HANDCUFFED**

**OUTRO:**

And that's it for today... But not to worry - there's plenty more in store next time! What will happen to Sama and Noni now that their father has been arrested? Do join us again next time to find out - and remember, you can also contact us on Facebook. Until then, bye bye.