

## Armchair Adventures: A Unity Adventure

00.00 [Intro song]

00.26 Connie: Hi guys, welcome back, this is the first episode of Armchair Adventures series two. This week we are joined by some songwriters from the African and Caribbean community.

Celeste: Hi Connie, I'm Celestial flow.

Abi: Hey, I'm Abi.

Carrol: Hello everyone, I'm Carrol.

Chris: Hey, I'm Chris!

Pauline: Hi I'm Pauline. And together we have written and composed a brand new anti-racist 'unity' song to celebrate African diaspora history.

Connie: African diaspora history, what does that mean?

Carrol: Well, African diaspora refers to the African people being scattered all over the world.

Abi: We have written a song that brings people together to combat racism and highlights that so-called Black History is part of everyone's history and not just something you think about in October.

Connie: Wow, that sounds amazing. I can't wait to hear the song. Do you guys have any ideas about where you're going to take us all on an Armchair Adventure today?

Celeste: No, not yet I'm afraid.

Carrol: We're quite busy today to be honest, getting ready for the recital and we just haven't had time to think.

Connie: Do you guys sing the song as well then?

Celeste: Well yes, but we have some help from the fantastic Be Positive Choir. They'll be along on the call in a moment ready for their final rehearsal before this afternoon's performance.

Connie: I can't wait to meet them. I love singing and song writing for that matter. I actually formed a girl band at school with some of my friends but I've left the band now.

Pauline: Artistic differences?

Connie: Kind of. They just always want to sing about boys and crushes and that and I wanted to sing about things that really matter, like politics and climate change and that kind of thing, so I said this and then Kiesha got dead mardy and started saying I was boring. The bands on Instagram, and they photoshopped all the photos of me and replaced them with chess pieces.

Pauline: Chess pieces?

Connie: Well yeah, what's more boring than chess? It's really knocked my confidence though; I've not sung since.

Pauline: Oh, that sounds very unkind Connie.

Connie: Well, yeah I guess it is. Where are you performing your song then this afternoon?

Chris: Outside the Marcus Rashford mural in Withington, Manchester.

Connie: I love Marcus Rashford and everything he's done for school children. It was just horrible all those terrible racist things some people said and wrote after the Euros.

Carrol: To be honest I lost my faith in humanity at that time Connie. Although, seeing all those people, especially the children, there taking the knee together helped me feel a bit better about the world.

Connie: Why do people take the knee?

Pauline: To show that they believe in justice and fairness for everyone Connie.

Chris: To show that they believe people should not be treated unfairly because of the colour of their skin.

Carrol: To show that racism has no place in our society.

Abi: The first person to take the knee was an American Football player and he chose to kneel as a peaceful protest after careful consideration.

Pauline: Kneeling was chosen because it is a respectful gesture and the shape your body makes as you kneel mirrors the shape of a flag flown at half-mast- which is something that happens after a tragedy.

Connie: I know listener let's all take the knee together. You can pretend that you are outside the Marcus Rashford mural after the Euros if you want or that you are a footballer before a big game. The important thing is we all do it together. Ready, go!

[DING. A MOMENTS SILENCE (A HINT OF MUSIC AND BIRDS TWEETING) WHISTLE AT THE END]

Pauline: The trouble with taking the knee at my age is it's so blinking hard to get back up.

Connie: Here let me help you, Pauline.

Pauline: Thanks love.

Chris: You know Connie, African diaspora people have been a big part of helping this country become what it is today for hundreds of years.

Connie: Has racism improved in your lifetime do you think Pauline?

Pauline: I was hoping things had changed since my Dad was young say. He came to England as part of what's known as the Windrush generation. He was asked to come. He was asked to Britain to help the country rebuild after the World War two. But he still got the monkey calls, the thrown bananas, the nasty words. And the reaction towards those young footballers after they missed their penalties after the euros, proved that things haven't changed anywhere near enough.

Celeste: Racism is very much still an issue in this country I'm afraid Connie.

Carrol: The messages of hope from the children that covered up the nasty words, written on Marcus's mural, were wonderful to see though.

Connie: What did they say?

Carrol: things like, 'you inspire me,' and 'you're my role model,' and 'national hero,' and 'you stepped up for us Marcus!' Those kinda things really.

Connie: I know listener, let's all think of a positive message to write to Marcus and the other footballers and pretend to stick it on a mural. Ready, go!

[NOISE OF THE GANG SCRIBBLING AND THINKING. THEN THE NOISE OF THEM STICKING THEIR WORDS TO THE MURAL. CHATTER OF GANG CHOOSING WHAT TO SAY]

Connie: Don't forget to take a selfie!

[SOUND OF CAMERA CLICKING MULTIPLE TIMES AND THE GANG SHOUTING 'GET ME IN']

Connie: The nasty words that were written and said after the Euros are only from a few people now though aren't they, most people aren't like that though are they, like, you know, like proper racist racist, if you know what I mean?

Abi: Connie it's not just the obvious racism that Pauline's dad experienced, or the footballers experienced after the euros that we want to highlight. It is important for your listeners to understand that treating other people unfairly can be something people do without thinking.

Pauline: Most people don't do this on purpose, they do it because they've always done things that way and never questioned it.

Celeste: And when you are on the receiving end of lots of unfair acts by lots of people that make you feel bad or left out, they add up.

Carrol: That's when you see whole communities of people being unfairly treated and not receiving the same opportunities or benefits as other groups of people.

Abi: It's ok to get it wrong in the past, it is what you do in the present that counts.

Chris: That's why we wrote the song.

Connie: Thank you so much for sharing that with me. It has really made me think. Well we better get the choir on the line so you can do your final rehearsal.

[DIAL TONE. BLAST OF SINGING FROM THE CHOIR]

Connie: Hi guys, that was amazing, you must be the choir.

Choir all say different hellos.

Choir leader: Hello Connie, hello listener. Yes we are B positive and we are here to be a blessing, we want you to be blessed and we want us all to be positive. But I'm afraid we have a problem.

Connie: What's that?

Choir leader: Well our soloist hasn't turned up, I'm afraid she's having to self-isolate and we are in need of a replacement or today's performance cannot go ahead.

Pauline: Don't worry you lot Connie is a singer.

Connie: Oh I can't, I haven't sung since... well the incident with the band and well I'm just a school kid, and besides I haven't had time to practice.

Abi: You said you wanted to sing about something that really matters Connie, you won't get a better opportunity than this one.

Connie: I guess not but...well... no one will listen to me and I don't think my voice is important and besides I'm well... white.

Pauline: Oh Connie, your voice is very important, isn't it everyone?

Everyone reacts positively: Oh yes, absolutely, etc.

Celeste: I think we know where we'd like to take you on an Armchair Adventure now Connie.

Connie: Really?

Pauline: Absolutely.

Celeste: We are going to take everyone on an African Diaspora History adventure to discover how racism is everyone's problem, and we have to speak or sing together in one voice before real change can happen.

## **Scene 2**

[ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES THEME MUSIC PLAYS]

[THE NOISE OF PEOPLE GATHERED TO HEAR MARTIN LUTHER KING AT THE MARCH OF WASHINGTON.]

Connie: Where are we?

Celeste: We are on a march.

Carrol: A march for freedom and equality for all people.

Abi: We are all gathered here to listen to Dr Martin Luther King speak.

Pauline: Dr Martin Luther King was an American preacher, humanitarian and activist who used the power of his words and non-violent action to make the world a fairer place to be.

Carrol: We are here on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1963.

Chris: So many people

Abi: Feel the excitement, the anticipation.

Celeste: A buzz in the air

Chris: Flags, freedom, people shouting.

Abi: Amen.

Celeste: Clapping, cheering, A change is coming.

Pauline: Something is happening, can you feel it?

Abi: Warm sun, a cool breeze, change in the air.

Pauline: Different faces. Cultures. Nationalities. Men, women and children arm in arm.

Abi: Placards. Peace and unity.

Carrol: We are part of history today.

Connie: What do you see, hear or feel at the march for freedom listener?

[DING]

(They listen to the part of the speech that is about a future in which "the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners" could "sit down together at the table of brotherhood," a future in which his four children are judged not "by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character." "I have a dream")

Connie: He is soo moving and uplifting.

Abi: You see Connie, people's words can make a difference.

Connie: I know all this is like way back in history, but I don't get it, why were people so racist in the first place. I could never be racist. I treat everyone equally.

[A NEWS RADIO REPORT ABOUT mlk BEING ASSASINATED]

Connie: I don't understand. Why?

Pauline: A lot of good people have lost their lives in the fight for equality and fairness

Connie.

[SILENCE APART FROM THE SOUND OF BIRDS TWEETING]

### Scene 3

[THE SOUND OF CHILDREN PLAYING]

Connie: Where are we now?

Celeste: At a school. A lady called Jane Elliot is the teacher.

[A DINNER BELL. THE SOUND OF CHILDREN QUEING FOR LUNCH.]

Jane: All those with brown eyes can come and get your lunch.

Connie: I've got brown eyes, that's lucky.

Connie: Are you guys not getting any, you've all got brown eyes.

Carrol: We're just going to watch this one Connie.

Connie: Suit yourself.

Jane: Brown eyes pupils are cleaner and smarter.

Connie: Psst that's us guys, I'm buzzing.

Jane: Blue eyes pupils' are lazy and sit around doing nothing.

They will have to wait for their lunch. And after lunch, brown eyed pupils get to play on the field, but blue eyes do not.

Connie: What colour eyes do you have listener, would you be with me playing on the field or would you be stuck watching with the blueys?

[DING]

Connie: I know listener, if you have brown eyes you pretend to play on the field with me, if you have blue eyes or any other colour for that matter, you just pretend to watch us have fun. Ready, go!

[DING]

[THE SOUND OF CONNIE AND CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE FIELD]

Connie: Wow, playing on that field is really fun. I feel like proper important. It's so much better having brown eyes don't you think?

Jane: Ok children, that part of the exercise is over, it is now time to swap, from now on in it

will be the blue-eyed children that have the special treatment.

Connie: What? What exercise? I thought she said brown eyes were best.

Abi: I'm afraid Connie you've just taken part in an experiment designed to teach children about racism.

Connie: What do you mean?

Abi: Well, on the day after Martin Luther King was shot, a white teacher called Jane Elliot set out to teach children how easy it can be to take part in things that are unfair and unjust on others.

Pauline: How easy it is to accept that through something as simple as eye colour, that you are better than someone in some way.

Celeste: And how easy it is to act and think differently because of this.

Pauline: Also, she wanted her white pupils to understand in some way what it felt like to be discriminated against like black pupils felt and still feel.

Celeste: So she invented the blue eye brown eye experiment, which has been repeated many times since.

Connie: Oh my gosh, have I just been... Oh no, I've just acted in a racist way haven't I? Does that mean I'm a racist?

Abi: Connie calm down.

Connie: I'm soo sorry. I'm so ashamed!

Abi: Connie it is what you do next that counts. Actions speak much louder than words.

[BIRDS TWEETING]

## **MIDROLL AD**

### **Scene 4**

[DRIPPING SOUND AND THE ECHO OF A PRISON CELL]

Connie: Where are we now?

Celeste: This is Nelson Mandela a civil rights leader in South Africa.

Connie: Why is he in prison?

Chris: He was imprisoned for protesting against apartheid and for equal rights.

Abi: Apartheid is a way of governing people that separates African diaspora people and white people and led to African diaspora people being treated very unfairly.

Connie: He must hate the people that did this to him. How would you feel if someone put you in prison for believing in fairness and justice for all listener?

[DING]

Pauline: Nelson OMadiba his clan or family name, tried to understand and educate the people that imprisoned him. He inspired people all over the world.

[PEOPLE CHEERING]

Celeste: On his release he collaborated with white leaders and strived to make South Africa a place of equality for people regardless of race or colour.

## Scene 5

[SOUND OF CROWD CHEERING]

Pauline: Now it is 1936 and we are at Hitler's Olympic Games in Germany. Hitler led a party called the Nazi's and they believed that white people were the best race and any other races, including African diaspora people, are inferior to them.

Connie: Who is that man on the podium, he has a gold medal around his neck?

Celeste: That's Jesse Owens and that is one of four gold medals he won at this games.

Carrol: Jesse is an African diaspora man and he was that fast they called him the Buckeye Bullet.

Celeste: Jesse believed that it was important to show Hitler and people like him that people of all colours and races can achieve amazing things and sports can be used to unite people.

Connie: I know listener, let's all pretend to be Jesse Owen on the podium receiving a gold medal at the Olympic Games.

[DING. NOISE OF A MASSIVE CROWD ERRUPTING IN CHEERS]

Connie: What an amazing feeling. Who's the guy hugging Jesse?

Pauline: That is Luz Long. He is the German and white competitor who came second. He was also very brave. He embraced Jesse in front of Hitler the leader of his country. Jesse and Luz's actions change minds and brought people together at a really challenging time for the whole world.



Carrol: You see Connie, it is so important that people act to combat racism wherever it occurs.

Abi: If you witness racism or people being unfair to others because of the colour of their skin you have to call it out. You have to act. That's how change will happen.

Connie: But everyone we have met on today's adventures so far has been like... in a position of power or like famous or something, and apart from Jane they have all been men.

## Scene 6

[SCRATCHING OF PENCIL ON PAPER. WE HEAR THE MUMBLE OF PEOPLE WORKING OUT SUMS IN THEIR HEAD. WE HEAR CHALK ON BLACKBOARD.]

Connie: What's going on here?

Celeste: These women are computers.

Connie: What do you mean they're computers?

Celeste: Well, the original computers were people- mathematicians- working out big sums and calculations. These women are helping NASA with the space race.

Connie: Space race?

Carrol: Yes. It's 1961 and these women are trying to put John Glen into space.

Pauline: It is still segregation in America at this time, so this all-African diaspora group of remarkable women have to work separately from the white people- separate toilets, separate canteen, separate water fountains and a lot lower pay.

Connie: That soo unfair.

Abi: But even under such challenging circumstances, these wonderful overlooked under-recognised women made a profound difference, which eventually resulted in the first moon landing.

Celeste: The most famous one was Katherine Johnson. Katherine was the first African diaspora woman to work as a NASA scientist. Her calculations were essential in getting astronauts into space safely and most importantly getting them back to earth in one piece.

Abi: African diaspora women like Katherine have made a profound impact on the world we live in. We need to shout this from the roof tops because the contribution of women of colour has been overlooked for too long.

Connie: But what can I do, what can a white school kid from Ashton do to combat racism?

Abi: You can do a lot Connie.

Chris: Change takes everyone coming together working together to achieve great things.

Pauline: Great things like traveling to space.

Celeste: Like walking on the moon.

Carrol: Like freedom and equality for all people.

[CHOIR SINGING]

You can move mountains, if you believe.

You can change the world,

Shape the world,

Took only one voice to have a dream.

United together as one family.

No matter the culture,

No matter the colour.

Yeh, people will hear what you've got to teach.

Unity,

And love is all we need.

Unity.

And truth will set us free.

Abi: Do you understand why it is so important for you to join in with us now Connie?

Connie: Yes, I do.

[CONNIE SINGING]

I was not using my voice,

Had no confidence to sing.

No one would care and I was afraid.

Afraid of what people might think.

Now I know all our voices matter,

Stand as one people,

Sing in unity.

Connie: Listener, you join in as well- together every voice counts.

[CHOIR SINGING]

Unity,  
And love is all we need.  
Unity.  
And truth will set us free.

Because all our voices matter,  
Stand as one people,  
Sing in unity  
The love you'll see.

Unity,  
And love is all we need.  
Unity.  
And truth will set us free.

## Scene 7

[BACK TO REALITY]

Connie: How incredible. That was an experience I'll never forget.

Pauline: Me neither.

Carrol: Nor I.

Celeste: Absolutely.

Chris: That was amazing!

Choir leader: You sang beautifully Connie. Thank you so much. I think it really helps when you are singing about something that really matters. Well done.

Connie: Thank you so much. Today's adventure has taught me that anyone can act unfairly to others, and it is what you do next that counts. It's also taught me that everyone must come together for real change to happen. The collective voice is so much stronger, strength in unity. No voices left behind.

Abi: It's wonderful to hear you say that Connie. Change doesn't have to always be a big thing you know. Multiple small acts by 'ordinary' people make a big difference. If you

only know 10 people, influence them, educate them, have a conversation with them, that's how we can make real change happen.

Connie: Thanks Abi. Well, as always, I have the best customers a travel agent could ask for - thank you. Next time listener, another one of my lovely customers gets to take us on another Armchair Adventure; inspired by their passions and interests, but for now, it's time to say goodbye. Goodbye.

Ensemble: Bye, bye Connie, goodbye, Au Revoir, Arrivederci, See ya...

Connie: End. Call. Now.

[END CALL SOUND]

Connie: Lovely.

Credits:

Today's adventure was a 'Made By Mortals' production in partnership with The Caribbean and African Health Network.

Coproduced by Celestial Flo, Pauline Omoboye, Abi Idowu, Chris Makinde, Mandy Jelenje and Carrol May Nelson.

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