



FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY
Episode 1. Jamie's Size
FAN/HFLE - Ashe Project

Based on Khyla's Body

INT. DAY. THE MYRIE HOME

A Reggae music bed fades in on the radio, followed by the sound of radio static as someone is obviously changing the station. The next song is a dancehall song. Immediately there is the sound of radio static as if someone once again has changed the radio to a station playing a gospel song. Ethereal sounds follow, then a somewhat disembodied voice is heard. It is obviously not the sound of a real person.

GRANNY B

I don't know what this thing they call music doing on the airwaves. No wonder the children today don't know dem left foot from dem right senses. But these are not ordinary times. I just wish they could hear me like they used to. Now all I can do is wake dem up or dream dem. And this morning, one piece of haataclaps about to break. Well, dem say when trouble tek yuh, pickney shirt fit yuh. But what if you are already pickney-child and don't know to keep on yuh clothes in the public eye?

There is the sound of a voice calling out as if from a distance and then the radio music abruptly cuts off. The sound of footsteps and shuffling are heard as someone walks in. A woman's voice is heard.

MARIE

Hello... Hello...

There is the sound of a window being open.

MARIE

How it always sound like somebody outside at this time of the morning on a Saturday?

Sound of someone else shuffles into the room.

MARTIN

I tell you there is nobody there.

MARIE

But I hear something.

MARTIN

And I tell you that yuh hearing things.

MARIE

Is almost like the radio was playing by itself.

MARTIN

It was all in your head Marie.

MARIE

Martin, I am not going mad, although with these children, I think sometimes it bound to happen.

MARTIN

They are good children Marie.

MARIE

Some of the times.

MARTIN

Most of the times.

MARIE

I agree. Dem good, but dem stressful bad.

MARTIN

I just wish my mother was still alive to see how beautifully they are growing.

MARIE

Yes. I really miss Granny B. Can't believe is almost three years already that she passed. This time of the morning she would be out here trying to find some gospel music or something else to play while she start her cooking.

There is the sound of a knocking at the door.

MARIE

Who could be knocking at the door so early?

MARTIN

Who else? Only Kiara...

There is the sound of locks being pulled and the door being opened.

KIARA

Good morning Mr. Myrie. Good morning Mrs. Myrie.

MARIE

Morning Kiara, yuh know what time it is?

KIARA

Yes Mrs. Myrie, it's six-forty-five...

MARTIN

In the morning...

KIARA

Of course in the morning.

MARTIN

On a Saturday. You don't think this is a little early to go visiting someone's house on a Saturday morning?

KIARA

Not really? Where is Jamie?

MARIE

Asleep, I'm sure.

KIARA

No. I talked to her on whatsapp this morning already.

MARTIN

Look Kiara, it is very early and...

There is the sound of another door being opened. It is Jamie's bedroom door.

JAMIE

Morning mommy and daddy.

MARIE AND MARTIN

Morning Jamie.

MARIE

What you two cooking up so early on a Saturday morning?

JAMIE

Mommy you know I don't like to cook.

MARIE

You know what I mean.

JAMIE

Mommy can Kiara and I go to my room now? We have to talk girl's talk.

MARIE

Girls talk nuh. I am giving you half an hour and then you going to come help me cook the boiled bananas and dumplings.

JAMIE

Ok mommy.

There is the sound of a door slamming and we hear an audible sigh from Martin.

MARTIN

First I ever hear Jamie just say "Ok mommy" to go and do any cooking. I wonder what dem up to.

MARIE

That Kiara is a handful and I don't know if she is a good influence on Jamie.

MARTIN

Give her a chance.

Music transitions us with the rustling of fabric and the giggling of girls, placing us inside Jamie's room.

KIARA

Soooooooo.....

JAMIE

Soooooooo what?

KIARA

Don't play cute with me Jamie
Elizabeth Myrie. I want to know if you

made up your mind?

JAMIE

About what?

KIARA

Stop it. Just stop playing cute. Are you coming on the beach trip or not? Remember that Demario is going to be there.

JAMIE

Oh that. I didn't even remember about the beach trip.

KIARA

Lie. Lie. Lie. It's all that everybody at the school been talking about. Like Eh-Vry-Boh-di... Have you even told your parents about it as yet?

JAMIE

Not yet.

KIARA

Why not? What happening with you? Just tell me the truth and done.

JAMIE

It's nothing... really...

KIARA

Ok, what is it really Jamie? ohhhh. I know what it is.

JAMIE

No you don't.

KIARA

Oh, so you are admitting now that something is wrong.

JAMIE

Not all. Just saying that... just that...

KIARA

I know what it is. Is all about Shaneaka right?

JAMIE

No. Why would anything be about
Shaneaka...

KIARA

Yes. It's about Shaneaka and what she
said...

JAMIE

I don't even remember what she said
about me in the lunch room...

KIARA

So how you know exactly what I was
talking about then?

JAMIE

That's just it. I don't have any idea
what you're talking about.

KIARA

Jamie. I know you felt a way when she
said what she said about your body.

JAMIE

I don't...

KIARA

Jamie. She said it loud enough for
everybody to hear, that if the beach
trip gets too boring and we run out of
games, we can always use you as a
beach ball cause your body round up
round up and roley poley like a ball.

JAMIE

Oh yea, that?

KIARA

Yes, that.

JAMIE

How could I forget that?

KIARA

I think you couldn't forget that. And
that's why you don't want to go to the
beach trip.

JAMIE

Yuh think?

KIARA

Jamie, you have a nice round-up body.
So what?

JAMIE

Yuh mean I'm fat. Look at all these
folds at my side and the fat on my
stomach looks disgusting. You remember
the models we were looking at
yesterday in the magazine. That's the
ideal body.

KIARA

You're not fat. You have a nice body
and you shouldn't be afraid to show it
off at the beach.

JAMIE

That's not what Shaneaka and the rest
of the class think.

KIARA

So what if she doesn't like your body.
I wish I had all the curves like you.
Me just mostly skin and bones. I don't
even have breasts yet like you.

The sound of Marie's voice is heard calling out Jamie's name
from afar off and then there is a knocking on the door. The
sound of a lock pulling and then the door opening is heard.

MARIE

Jamie. I want you to come help me
finish up with the cooking.

MARTIN

She just means that you must come and
watch the pot for us while we dash
over to Mrs. Jones to check how her
son is coming along.

MARIE

What happen Jamie? What's the matter?

MARTIN

Jamie, you're not talking. You don't
hear your mother ask you a question?
What happen to you?

KIARA

Mr and Mrs Myrie, did Jamie tell you

about the beach trip next weekend?

MARIE

No... what beach trip is this?

JAMIE

(Whispering to Kiara)

How yuh chat so much man? I'm not ready to tell them.

MARTIN

Not ready to tell us what Jamie?

KIARA

Well, our form teacher is taking the class on a science field trip next week Saturday morning and we will end the day at the beach before we come home.

MARTIN

How come you don't give us this information yet Jamie? You know our policy. We have to get a note from the school, signed by the principal and at least one week in advance.

KIARA

It's ok mom. I'm not going.

MARIE

Really? But you love going to the beach. You want to tell us what this is about?

KIARA

She think her body don't look beach ready and...

JAMIE

Kiara, gwaan home nuh. Go home now.

MARTIN

Jamie, that's not nice. But come Kiara, let's leave Marie and Jamie to have a little talk.

MARIE

Come let's go in the kitchen and watch the pot together for a second.

MARTIN

Come Kiara. See you soon my loves.
Will give Mrs. Jones your love.

There is the sound of footsteps and a door slams. We hear a
pot on boil in the kitchen.

JAMIE

Mommy, I just don't want to go ok?

MARIE

That's ok if you don't want to go but
what is this I'm hearing about you not
liking your body?

KIARA

Is just this girl at school say that
my body roley polley like a beach ball.

MARIE

And you believe her?

JAMIE

Well. I... I ... I don't know it's
just that.

MARIE

I know. When people say mean and
embarrassing things it's hard to take
and hard to deal with. But I am still
asking, if YOU believe her...

JAMIE

No I don't believe her. It's just
that...

MARIE

Exactly. Look Jamie. Look out there in
my garden and you will see a wide
variety of flowers with different
shapes and sizes. And all of them are
beautiful to somebody. But most
importantly, they are beautiful to me
and they are mine. You know what that
means?

JAMIE

It means I am beautiful to you.

MARIE

Yes. That too. But even more than that. It's your body and so you have to see it as beautiful to YOU Jamie Myrie. You are truly beautiful, no matter what anybody says. But you have to know that for yourself.

JAMIE

So it's ok if people say bad things about my body out loud like that?

MARIE

No it's not ok, but I don't want you to think that just because someone says something mean about your body, that it's true. What it really comes down to is what you really think about your body.

JAMIE

Well, I think I am a little fat to tell you the truth, but definitely not a beach ball.

MARIE

Jamie, you are a big boned girl and you should not expect to look like a skinny girl. But do you know how to take control of your body?

JAMIE

You tell me all the time mom. But it's not the telling you that matters. It's what you do with it. Exercise and eat right.

MARIE

But I eat right with you. You're always cooking healthy food. Always giving me vegetables and fruits to eat.

MARIE

But do you eat them? That is the thing.

JAMIE

That is the thing.

MARIE

The truth is that if you want your body to be healthy and strong and firm and you want to stay out of hospital from sickness like diabetes and such things, you have to eat right. And don't throw away the good food in the garbage and then ask for burgers and fries and hot dogs and such unhealthy fatty food and things.

JAMIE

But they taste so good.

MARIE

So you're saying my food don't taste good?

JAMIE

No mom. I really love your cooking. Is just that... well, when I'm at school and the kids are going on the road for food, everybody wants burgers and those kinds of things yuh know. So it's like second nature to me now. And they taste soooooo good.

MARIE

The advertisements taste better.

JAMIE

What yuh mean?

MARIE

Jamie. They spend so much money to advertise and market all of this junk food to us because they want to make money, not because it is good for us. And sometimes it don't even taste that good, but we become used to it. And then it's so easy to get fat and sick on all that sugary, salty, oily food.

JAMIE

You're right mom. I'm going to do my best to do better. Cause I really want to look good in a bathing suit...

MARIE

Yes, and I really want you to stay healthy.

Ethereal sound effects are heard and then the disembodied voice of Granny B. returns.

GRANNY B

Lawks. Mi poor Jamie chile. She don't realize that they play on her mind with all the advertising to make she think she have to eat junk food to fit in. And then when she eat the junk food and it push her body way out of shape, she worse don't feel like she fit in. Is like she can't win. This whole thing is like a big sin. But I love how Marie brain working to get Jamie thinking. Anyways, mek we see how dem work it out next time.

END OF EPISODE