

Jamaica Kincaid - *Girl*

[00:00:00.00]

[00:00:00.72] Wash the white clothes on Monday, and put them on the stone heap. Wash the color clothes on Tuesday, and put them on the clothesline to dry. Don't walk bare-haired in the hot sun. Cook pumpkin fritters in very hot, sweet oil Soak your little clots right after you take them off. When buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way, it won't hold up well after a wash. Soak swordfish overnight before you cook it. Is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school? Always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach. On Sundays, try to walk like a lady, and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming. Don't sing benna in Sunday school. You mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions. Don't eat fruits on the street-- flies will follow you.

[00:01:08.33] But I don't sing benna on Sundays at all, and never in Sunday school.

[00:01:13.70] This is how to sew on a button. This is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on. This is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down, and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming.

[00:01:29.62] This is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease. This is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease.

[00:01:40.23] This is how to grow okra far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants. When you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water, or else it makes your throat itch when you're eating it.

[00:01:54.56] This is how you sweep a corner. This is how you sweep a whole house. This is how you sweep a yard.

[00:02:00.23] This is how you smile to someone you don't like too much. This is how you smile to someone you don't like at all. This is how you smile to someone you like completely.

[00:02:09.49] This is how you set a table for tea. This is how you set a table for dinner. This is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest. This is how you set a table for lunch. This is how you set a table for breakfast.

[00:02:23.82] This is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way, they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming. Be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit. Don't squat down to play marbles. You're not a boy, you know. Don't pick people's flowers. You might catch something. Don't throw stones at blackbirds because it might not be a blackbird at all.

[00:02:53.53] This is how to make a bread pudding. This is how to make ducana. This is how to make pepper pot.

[00:02:59.26] This is how to make a good medicine for a cold. This is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child.

[00:03:07.63] This is how to catch a fish. This is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you.

[00:03:15.68] This is how to bully a man. This is how a man bullies you. This is how to love a man, and if this doesn't work, there are other ways, and if they don't work, don't feel too bad about giving up.

[00:03:27.19] This is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you. This is how to make ends meet. Only squeeze bred to be it's fresh.

[00:03:39.10] But what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?

[00:03:42.81] You mean to say that, after all, you're really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?