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 huh. I am giving you half an hour and then you going to come help me cook the boiled bananas and dumplins.

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
Soo0000.....

JAMIE
Soo0000 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 what 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 poley 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 embarassing 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