

# Girl- jamiaca kincaid



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Girl by Jamaica Kincaid starts off with a traditional adult female figure telling a young girl commands on how the girl should conduct responsibilities. Oftentimes, phrases are repeated by the female figure. The female figure asked the girl " is it true that you sing hymns in Sunday school? " then continues to tell the girl how to act. The girl interrupts the female figure to answer the question. However, the girl's statement is ignored and the female figure continues talking by telling the girl " this is how to... " Or " this is how you... " The female figure beats how to act and how to do every accessibility into the girl's head.

As the poem continues, the female figure threatens the girl several times by telling her that if she continues doing what she has been doing she is going to turn into " the slut she is bent on becoming. " At the end of the poem, the female figure goes on to tell the girl that she must " always squeeze the bread to make sure it's fresh. " In response to this statement the girl innocently asks, " But what if the baker won't let me feel the bread? " The female figure then realizes that the young girl is already " going to be the kind of girl the baker won't let near the bread. This ending conversation presents the argument of the poem; traditional patterns versus individualism and tentatively the box. The semi-colon is used in the poem to break up ideas. The ideas stick to how women should behave, go about responsibilities, and hold relationships. The female figure is trying to teach the girl how to be the best that she can without being different through her ideas and repetition. The repetition forms the mold of the poem. Repetition gives the poem a traditional view, which in turn enables the girl's innocent comments to have such a strong impact.

The girl's comments also show the girl's individualism. The girl is not afraid to think outside the box and stick up for her beliefs. At the same time, the girl's comments make the female figure look at the girl like she is " bent on becoming a slut," because she is different then what traditional patterns call for and want. In an effort to change and develop into an individual, we still follow some traditions and some patterns. This is shown when the girl starts her lines off with the same word, " but". The word " but" is used to point out how something may not happen.

The voice of tradition is shown by the repetition of phrases throughout the poem. " This is how to" and " This is how you" are used in an effort to show the girl how to act and complete responsibilities. The word " don't" is used to tell the girl not only is she not to do something but that something is not done that way because it is not proper. Blatant commands, such as " soak your little clothes right after you take them off," are used to tell the girl that is how it is done. The main speaker of the poem is never identified in relation to the girl.

As a result, the speaker can take the place of the many voices of female figures in the girl's life and not signally, the girl's mother. The main speaker's voice shows traditional patterns of women. You always act the same way, do the same thing, and be the same as all other women no matter what. Yet, the potency of the girl's two innocent statements forces us, as readers, to think outside the box, to be an individual. Think of the impact the female figure would feel if the baker did not let his customers feel the bread for freshness?

In other words, think of the impact the female figure would feel if the world changed and she could no longer follow tradition? She would be completely lost and not know what to choose anymore. To me, individualism can only be unique to a certain point. There is always going to be common points between two people. It is at these common points where individualism continues clutching onto a few basic traditions and patterns of your history. You can still be an individual while still holding on to traditions, but no matter what, there is not a way to be one-hundred percent different than everyone else.

However, it is that small difference that matters most. The combination of being different and still having traditions and patterns that you follow is what makes you who you are. My initial thought to the reading was it is okay to become an individual even though others may criticize you or look down upon you. I felt strongly compelled to start thinking outside the box and find out what I would do if a tradition suddenly changed on me. It is up to me to decide on who I am as an individual and not up to any role-model or leader in my life to decide for me.