

## "Do This, Do That" – Writing in the Style of *Girl*

### The Challenge:

Write a short narrative or poem that captures the unspoken pressures, expectations, and internal voices that shape your daily life. Like Jamaica Kincaid's *Girl*, your piece should be composed of commands, reminders, criticisms, and warnings—the words of parents, teachers, society, or even your own subconscious.

This is about the invisible judge inside you. The voice that tells you who to be, what to do, how to act, and what not to say. The voice that never stops, never slows, never asks—only tells.

There should be no "I" or "you" in your piece. Let the commands and pressures speak for themselves.

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### Requirements:

- Poem or short narrative (your choice).
  - Use commands, instructions, and warnings rather than a traditional storyline.
  - No explicit pronouns—the reader should feel the weight of expectations without needing direct identification.
  - The piece should capture the rhythms of internal and external pressures, moving between obligations, anxieties, and fleeting moments of resistance.
  - Use repetition, pace, and fragmented thoughts to create immersion.
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### Tips for Strong Writing:

- What does your internal judge sound like?
  - Is it a parent's voice? A teacher's? Society's? Your own worst fears?
  - Does it contradict itself? Say one thing but expect another?
- Capture the rhythm of daily life.
  - Expectations don't come neatly—they pile, overlap, and clash.
  - Use long, breathless sentences to create pressure.
  - Use short, abrupt sentences to show certainty and control.
- Include moments of tension.
  - Do the commands ever contradict each other?
  - Is there a moment where the speaker pushes back? Even briefly?
- Think about sensory details.

- What does expectation *feel* like?
  - Is it the tightness in your chest when you're told to do better?
  - Is it the weight of a tradition you never questioned?
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### **Example Lines for Inspiration:**

- *Keep your hands still, stop tapping, no one likes a fidgeter.*
  - *Speak up. But not like that. Softer. Stronger. Less. More.*
  - *Don't let them see you hesitate, don't look lost, don't ask stupid questions, don't act like you know everything either.*
  - *Smile at the right people, nod at the wrong ones, remember their names, pretend you don't hear what they whisper.*
  - *Do the work. Do it faster. Do it better. Did you do enough?*
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### **Model Works for Inspiration:**

- "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid (direct inspiration—commands, expectations, and societal pressures)
- "Rules of the Game" by Amy Tan (expectations from family, cultural navigation)
- "How to Date a Brown Girl (Black Girl, White Girl, or Halfie)" by Junot Díaz (instruction-based storytelling)
- Poems by Claudia Rankine and Ocean Vuong (internalized pressures in poetic form)