

1 Shelagh: but language obviously, language and words, but language which is just a huh is such a beautiful mix of
2 Creole and English in this novel. Why was it important to you to give us that in the story?

3 Pamela: well, I grew up speaking hmm English of course because uh in uh any home in the Caribbean where
4 parents have aspirations quote unquote for their children especially when I was growing up. Hmm you
5 spoke Creole and people say you can't talk like that. You have to talk English. You will not get
6 anywhere if you talk. And so [laugh]

7 Shelagh: [laugh]

8 Pamela: and so hum I grew up speaking bilingual I guess essentially for those people who believe Creole is a
9 different language. But I always say and it is true that Creole gives me stories and people, characters
10 and stories, and poetry. It's an amazing amazing language, especially Jamaican Creole which sort of has
11 any number of levels some closer to English, some some that aren't really Creole Creole, and it's
12 natural for us to range across this continuum of language and so it's just very natural for me to write in
13 that way. I mean you know you can't write a Caribbean character who speaks exclusively English unless
14 you want to mark that character as a particular kind of person. So it's I I wouldn't be able to write in
15 any kind of true authentic way about the Caribbean if people weren't talking Creole. Some kind of
16 Creole, Trinidad Creole, Barbados Creole, Jamaican Creole. A Creole of some kind.

17 Shelagh: The prose in red jacket is a mixture of standard English and the sort of island vernacular hummm it
18 really really sings. And one of your main characters Grace calls moving back and forth between the two
19 code switching. What is code switching?

20 Pamela: What code switching is essentially that. It's hum it's not a I think it's a term appropriately applied to any
21 movement from language to language. I mean people speak nowadays spanglish chinglish. I would
22 think that any switching combination from huh Mandarin to English to Mandarin would be in fact code
23 switching. I know the term from having used it, and been accustomed of hearing it used to refer to
24 switching in the Caribbean from English to Creole back to English and so on. There is another term
25 called code sliding where you go from quote unquote level to level I'm gonna say hum of the
26 continuum so that you could start. I could be speaking to you pretty much in English and then I start to
27 talk like this sort of like English but really not English and then MIS-TA-FI-TA-SO.

28 Shelagh: [laugh]

29 Pamela: which is [laugh] and that's code sliding. Right? Hum but the switching I think is appropriately applied to
30 the moving in a string of speech from code to code.