

Hello Dede, can you hear me?

I'm calling because your daughter has locked me out of the house again. I'm not being dramatic, I'm tired. In a few minutes, I will be in the house, I know. I also know that you know the reason I am not yet in my room with my shoes and bra off is because Uche is in her room with the door closed, the curtains down and headphones on. And that her mind that never stays in one place has wandered so far away from this address that it will take me almost breaking down this door for her to return. Soon, I'll hear her running because her ears and mind have finally opened, she will open the door and think saying 'I'm sorry, I didn't hear you knocking before' or reaching to carry my handbag or this shopping bag full of vegetables, meat and pepper is enough to have kept me waiting at this door till I almost dropped of exhaustion. No, I couldn't find the goat meat that you like so you'll just have to like whatever i cook for you tonight, Dede, stop asking me silly questions. I'm telling you that Uche will be wearing her brother's t-shirt and her hair would smell of one concoction I don't understand but that's not the painful part. No, the painful part is that she will be wearing my slippers, or my scarf, or my earrings, or something that would make it painfully obvious that not only has she been in my bedroom since I left for work but that she has as usual, left the door open and mosquitoes are going to kill me this night.

She'll say she's sorry, that she forgot to shut the door, that she wasn't even there for that long, you see, this your daughter forgets everything. She'll forget to tell me that we are out of rice even though she's the one that eats everything, she'll forget to warm the stew I brought out of the freezer that I know I didn't tell her to warm, but wouldn't a grown woman who is old enough to be in her husband's house and have her own children know what she's supposed to do? Ehn, Dede? But at least, I know the house will be clean and as usual, she has completely rearranged the dining table again. Every morning the water flask is in front of the box filled with new glass cups, and every

afternoon when I get back, the flask is on the box and no longer in front of it, she calls it symmetry. I think this is why she doesn't remember the important things because she's too busy scattering the whole house and rearranging it again and thinking of things like symmetry. The other day she said she was going to marry a writer. I don't think your daughter with her whimsical rubbish knows that hunger can kill.

And she asks all these sorts of questions; Is God real? Are we really alone in the universe? Mama, what is the real reason why the Americans are interested in the moon? It is not enough that she drops herself on your lap with her big age and harasses you while you are trying to watch the TV, she thinks I have time.

One time when I was leaving the living room for the kitchen, I saw her standing in front of the mirror, dancing something like there were fire ants walking on her body and again I had to ask myself if this your daughter really came from me.

Hold on, I think I hear her comi