

The Curious Roommate

Narrator: After settling into their dorm room, Adichie and her roommate start to get to know each other.

Roommate: I heard you talking with your mother earlier while moving in. Your English is really good for you to be from Nigeria.

Adichie: English is actually Nigeria's official language.

Roommate: Oh (*pauses to think*: I never imagined a country from Africa would have English as their official language). Well, do you have any "tribal music" that you listen to?

Adichie: I actually brought some of my music. Let me go get it.

Narrator: Adichie goes into her room to get her music. Adichie comes back and hands her roommate her Mariah Carey tape. Her roommate makes a disappointed face.

Roommate: I didn't realize people from Nigeria would have access to music that is popular in America.

Adichie: I think you'd be surprised by a lot of things about me.

Roommate: Like what?

Adichie: Well, my family is middle-class because my father is a professor and my mother is an administrator at the University of Nigeria. We were even able to have live-in domestic help.

Narrator: The roommate makes a surprised face.

Roommate: Wow, I assumed so much about Africans, I never realized that they could be different than what the media shows. We're actually a lot more similar than I thought because I also listen to Mariah Carey.

Girls laughing

Narrator: Later that night as the girls are getting ready to eat dinner. Adichie turns on the stove to cook her meal.

Roommate: Wait, you know how to use a stove too?

Adichie giggling

Adichie: You've got a lot to learn my friend.

Narrator: As Adichie and her roommate head to their own rooms for the night, her roommate starts to contemplate about the conversation before dinner.

Roommate (thinking): *I can't believe I let myself believe this single story of what Africans are my entire life. Why does America let us, as kids, pity Africans, who seem to be just like us?*

Narrator: As Adichie's roommate continues to think until she drifts to sleep, Adichie has her own thoughts.

Adichie (thinking): Americans' perception of Africans is a lot different than I expected. This reminds me of when poverty was my single story of Fide and his family. I wonder what can be done to change this.