

Don't Come in Here

by Anonymous

No, it's nothing. Honestly.

I have the tiniest little headache, and I guess what you might call a touch of *ennui*.

No, that's not what *ennui* means. I know, ha ha! It does sound like something you can catch, but no.

I take that back! Maybe you *can* catch it.

Anyway, nope, nothing important. *Nothing's* bothering me!

Would you mind very much if I open this window a crack and let in a little fresh air? It's just, um, there's a smell, a very minor smell, nothing momentous. A smell of, how shall I say, old farts.

Yes, that's exactly it, a minute, non-annoying but fairly distinct odor of one's interior functions. Maybe it's the dog? Surely yes, it must be the dog, because it could never be you, sweetheart.

I might also open the sliding door, and I think I'll just put your shoes outside on the terrace for awhile. They could use some sunshine! Ha ha, maybe they'll go for a walk without you, and you'd have to wear different shoes!

What would you like for lunch today? Because I've been thinking, not that I've been counting but I *believe* it's possible that this might be the ninth or tenth lunch I've made recently. In a row, so I was thinking, do you mind taking potluck today? Just scrounge around and find something in the fridge? I know, nothing's already prepared. You ate all the chicken, sweetheart, just finished it right up! Gone in a flash! There's the cashew butter, of course. And crackers. I bought some.

I may have frozen them.

But we also have all those vegetables from the market, *so* many vegetables starting to wilt and it's so easy to chop some onion and throw it in a pan with a little oil, and... this pan, the one in the sink. And then slice the vegetables and stir fry them and add a can of sardines and a little smoked paprika, that stuff we bought in Spain and *voilà!* Lunch! So easy! A meal for two, we could even light a candle and celebrate something you made for both of us with your own capable hands, and hardly any dishes to wash.

Speaking of which, by the way, would you be so kind as to unload the dishwasher sometime today? I don't care when. Just, like, before tomorrow, when I'll be cleaning out the effing sink again and running another entire load. We use a lot of dishes for two people, don't we? Crazy, huh? And a lot of pots, like your oatmeal pan. You use that every day.

Do you know you shouldn't eat the same thing every day? Yes, it's bad for you. If you eat the same exact thing every single day for days and weeks on end, over and over with almost no variation in your routine, *ad infinitum*, your body will rebel and start putting up defenses. You won't absorb the nutrients anymore and then your body might just say, *Okay, enough, pal, enough of this same old same old, now I'm going to go all allergic on you. I will never again permit you to eat oatmeal with overpriced blueberries from a non-recyclable plastic bag without an extreme reaction on my part.*

Yes, it could happen!

Don't get huffy.

I'm going for a walk today. Yes, definitely. The air's looking really clean out there and the flowers are blooming and it's all just so *country*, so I think I'll take the car a couple of miles from here and go for a perfectly solitary walk down the road with all the trees, with the dog. After I trim the hair around her butt, because, you know, she's a mess and the groomers are booked for weeks!! And then a walk, before I have to start making lunch. I can't eat cashew butter and crackers. I can't.

Life is hard enough.

I'm going to go brush my hair.

Look, also, when I say *brush my hair*, that's just an expression. I do need to brush my hair, but there are a lot of other little tasks that go with that, so I'll be in the bathroom awhile. Just in case you forget I'm in the bathroom, I'm going to lock the door, okay? If you need a shower, can you please use the guest bathroom, but would you wait until I come out before you take your shower? I need the hot water, and I'd also SO APPRECIATE it if you don't rinse dishes with the hot water running nonstop while I'm in there. That is, if you were planning on doing either of those things today, taking a shower or rinsing dishes.

Well, you know. Lady stuff, which ha ha! sometimes does benefit from a little nip of wine or something stronger, like a cocktail, to make it more interesting and a bit more like a spa treatment. Since we have some of that wonderful gin left from when Dan and Margo came over and sat on the porch a million feet away with masks on and we all drank and pretended *this is so much fun*, where's the harm? Does anyone care if I'm enjoying a cocktail at 8:00 AM on a weekday?

Because I have news for you: NO one is paying the slightest attention to what I'm doing! I could lock

myself in the bathroom right now with booze and crackers, I could literally barricade myself in there for days, with my garden magazines and my phone and my nail polish and facial products to keep me occupied and the world would not pause for a single effing minute. If I missed a couple of Zoom meetings, who would notice? You know, I turned that proposal in right on time and it took days, and did Franklin or Wendy even read it?

Maybe I'd get a text: *were u in meeting?*

Barely four words, because more would be uncool. Never mind that they're taking more snack breaks and youtube breaks and naps now than anyone ever thought possible, you have to look busy. How long before they realize I haven't answered? People get distracted. There's so much available on Netflix now! And the President always has some important thing he's not worried about, and people have to keep up with the news. All those charts.

It might be better if I wasn't white. In fact if I was a woman of color barricaded in a cozy bathroom with cocktails and snacks and magazines, and a phone and home spa treatments, *if* anyone *did* notice I was missing and heard I was quarantining from the quarantine, they might just think I was on the right track, under the circumstances, and leave me to it. It might even seem like a protest statement. Long awaited and much deserved! Cheers!

I could throw that up on Instagram and get a zillion likes.

But since I'm just a middle-aged white woman threatening to lock herself in a bathroom indefinitely, in proximity of pink plastic razors and fortified with gin, you *could* try calling 911 and maybe they'd send someone. At least it would make a change around here, having young policemen to

talk to.

Of course I'm kidding!

You're all the man I need, honey.

Look, all I'm saying is, *Don't come in here*. Pretend I'm not even here. Go about your business, make lunch, don't make lunch. I'm going to put on some music so don't fret if you can't hear me, darling. If you want to feed the dog, and maybe trim the hair under her tail with those little scissors, I'm sure she'd appreciate it. I know I would!