Dear Ijeawele

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
(1977–present)

Teach [Chizalum] about difference. Make difference ordinary. Make difference normal. Teach her not to attach value to difference. And the reason for this is not to be fair or to be nice, but merely to be human and practical. Because difference is the reality of our world. And by teaching her about difference, you are equipping her to survive in a diverse world. She must know and understand that people walk different paths in the world, and that as long as those paths do no harm to others, they are valid paths that she must respect. Teach her that we do not know—we cannot know everything about life. Both religion and science have spaces for the things we do not know, and it is enough to make peace with that. What I hope for Chizalum is this: that she will be full of opinions, and that her opinions will come from an informed, humane, and broad-minded place.