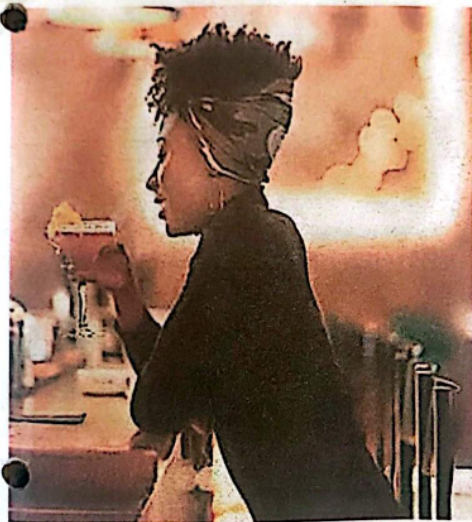


Our mothers prepared us for husbands. We became them



DIARY OF A BADDIE

with Angela Kateemu



Dear Diary,

Here is a Women's Day confession that will get my feminist card briefly confiscated. Sometimes, just sometimes, I would like someone else to drive. Not because I cannot drive. Please. I bought the car! But every now and then it would be nice to sit in the passenger seat of life, put your well-manicured feet on the dashboard, and not have to explain why that does not make me a traitor to the revolution.

Feminism handed us the tools to become self-sufficient: Degrees. Careers. Property. Passport stamps. Our own money, our own plans, our own names on the lease. And yet here is the thing nobody says out loud at the Women's Day brunch, somewhere between the mimosas and the "women who lead" speeches. A surprising number of us C-suite 40-something women, would quietly appreciate someone else making the dinner reservation. Because we are tired.

Tired of being the one with the plan. The one with the answers. The one who remembers the birthday, calls the plumber,

pays the bill, sends money home, and still gets asked what we are eating tonight.

Somewhere along the way, without anyone announcing it, we became the men our mothers prepared us for.

Our mothers were raised on a completely different instruction manual. Be soft. Be patient. Support your husband's vision. Keep the home warm. As such, they prepared us to be excellent partners to a certain type of man. The decisive one. The steady one. The man who opens the jar without ceremony and pays the bill without holding a small committee meeting about it.

Our mothers prepared us for husbands. We grew up and quietly became them.

We are opening our own doors. Paying our own rent. Planning the future. Sometimes also quietly funding the emotional growth of the men in our lives who are still "figuring things out at 48." And listen, personal growth is wonderful. We love a self-aware king. But it is alarming how many grown men appear to be on a decades-long gap year of self-discovery while the women beside them are run-

ning households, careers, family WhatsApp groups, and occasionally the national economy.

The men for whom we were prepared have wandered off somewhere. Possibly a retreat. Possibly a healing journey. Possibly a podcast where they discuss masculine energy for three hours while their girlfriend is outside organising the Uber. They will return once Mercury is direct.

So here we are. Competent. Capable. Very exhausted. Sitting at the top of lives we worked very

hard to build, holding a glass of whisky neat, because at this point we have evolved past pink cocktails into full bourbon territory.

Sometimes we would like to be led. Not led off a cliff. Not led back into the kitchen like it is 1952. Just the simple human relief of someone else saying, "Relax. I've got this." Because if we are being honest, many of us have spent the last decade on unpaid internship in emotional labour. And the hours are long. The independence that set

us free also placed us in a new role where we are carrying everything. The ambition. The bills. The planning. The emotional labour. The future. And occasionally looking around room wondering if we are only adults present.

And before anyone panics, I am not asking to go back to a world where I would return to a world where my ambition had to apologise for existing.

So this Women's Day I am giving my whisky to the com-



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