

Dear Diary,

Today we are discussing fixer-upper men. You know the type. Like old houses listed suspiciously cheap: "full of character," "needs a little TLC," "great bones." Translation? Structural issues that would make a seasoned contractor weep softly into his blueprint.

Honey, the foundation is not chipped. It is cracked. The kind of cracked that requires an inspection report, a prayer circle, and maybe an exorcism. And yet there you were, walking through the emotional property with your beautiful, generous, slightly delusional imagination already picking out curtains.

Let's talk about potential. That thing you saw at 11 pm on a Tuesday when he said something almost profound and looked at you like you were the most interesting woman in the room. He wasn't wrong. You were. That's exactly how the renovation started; not with reality, but with possibility.

Somewhere between the first date and the fourth unanswered text, a very specific kind of woman; intelligent, capable, and allegedly done with nonsense; walked straight into a condemned property, noticed the drafty windows screaming "unresolved childhood issues," and still whispered, "I can work with this."

Women have been redecorating emotional ruins since the beginning of time and calling it love. It is not love. It is unpaid labour

For sale: One good woman's time wasted on potential



DIARY OF A BADDIE

with
Angela Kateemu

with a side of emotional overtime. You're not falling for him; you're applying for a project manager position nobody advertised.

And here's what the listing never tells you: the price is never what's advertised. You think it's a little patience, a little communication, maybe some emotional tools you learned in therapy — tools that cost actual money, by the way. Next thing you know, you are three years deep, emotionally subcontracted into a renovation he never requested.

Because fixer-uppers are not always distressed. Many of them are comfortable exactly where

they are: settled into inconsistency, settled into emotional minimalism, settled into a version of themselves they have zero intention of upgrading. You arrived with a vision board.

He thought you were just passing through.

The red flags? Oh, they were there. But red is such a confident colour, and we are women who love a bold aesthetic. So, inconsistency becomes "he's complex." Emotional unavailability becomes "he's just different." The midnight texts become "his communication style." Babe, that's not a style. That's a pattern. And patterns are data.



Forty taught me something thirty couldn't afford to learn yet: potential is not a personality. It is not a promise. It is not a down payment on the man he might become once life magically becomes "he's just different." The midnight texts become "his communication style." Babe, that's not a style. That's a pattern. And patterns are data.

in front of you, unbothered and unchanged.

I have excellent standards. I have also, on more than one occasion, left them parked outside while I went in to do the work of two people.

Never again. Here's the whiskey truth that burns a little but set-

ties warm: A man who wants to grow, grows. He doesn't need you drafting blueprints, managing timelines, supplying emotional materials, and also being the reward at the end of the renovation. That's not a relationship. That's a construction site. And you, my love, are not the contractor. You are the whole damn property!

So next time you walk into something with good bones and suspicious energy, read the inspection report. Trust your instincts. And if the foundation is cracked, do not make an offer, no matter how charming the balcony looks at sunset. Because being forty and done with fixer-uppers means you stop searching for projects and start choosing spaces that already feel like peace.

The forty-year-old baddie isn't theorizing about men. She has receipts. Two decades of field work. She's not coming from ideology; she's coming from experience, a raised eyebrow, and a glass of whiskey that has seen things.

XoXo

—TheKat