



DIARY OF A BADDIE

with
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Dear Diary,

Let us start with what we refuse to say out loud; a Kyanja Airbnb booking is not just a booking. It is a statement of intent. The good WiFi. The tasteful linen. The kitchen you will never use because you did not go there to cook. Nobody drives to Kyanja for the fresh air. You go to Kyanja because you need a room in a building where nobody knows you, in a suburb far from your real life.

We have all either been there, or know someone who has. The Airbnb is the modern alibi. The discreet weekend. The story that begins with "I need a break from the city" and ends with you triple-checking that your location was off the entire time. You have seen how those Airbnbs advertise... "comes with a Jacuzzi that massages your soul." And while you are deep into your soul searching, Big brother is watching.

So, when the Kyanja Airbnb scandal broke; hidden cameras, leaked videos, a Telegram group

that had more subscribers than your favourite podcast; the collective gasp was less about shock and more about a very specific, very personal panic. The kind that makes you think; when exactly was I last in Kyanja?

Here is the part nobody is saying: What the hosts did [allegedly] was criminal. Installing hidden cameras in rooms people pay to be private in is a violation. The guests, whoever they are, whatever they were doing, deserved the privacy they paid for.

And yet.

The videos spread faster than any public health announcement I have ever seen in this country. From private Telegram groups to public timelines to your cousin's WhatsApp status. The same people posting "this is so wrong" were the ones who had already watched it twice, screenshot it, and sent it to three different group chats.

Which brings me to my actual question: Who is really the voyeur here?

The host who installed the

Kyanja effect: Privacy, desire and who is really watching



cameras? Absolutely. But also, the thousands of you who downloaded, shared and debated the

footage. Because someone else's private moment was suddenly available, and availability, in this

city, is permission.

There is something particularly Kampala about this. We are a city that is deeply invested in other people's business. We decided that the right to privacy exists in theory, especially if the private thing involves desire.

Because let us be honest: People were not in Kyanja Airbnbs doing their taxes. They were there being human; messy and alive in ways that all of us are when we think no one is watching. And the moment that footage leaked, the conversation shifted from "hosts violated their guests" to "what were those people doing?" As if the doing was the scandal. As if wanting something private was carte blanche to muscle your way into their business.

I am less interested in their story than what it tells us about ourselves. We do not believe in privacy. The understanding is that you are allowed to have desires as long as you have them silently, invisibly, with no paper trail and no witnesses. The moment evidence surfaces; desire becomes the crime.

And so, we book Kyanja Airbnbs. We turn off our locations. We use the second SIM. We do everything in our power to exist; fully, privately, humanly in a city that is constitutionally incapable of minding its business.

We build elaborate systems of discretion not because we are ashamed, but because we have learned, through very clear experience, that this city will parade us when it gets the chance.

The cameras in Kyanja were not just a violation of privacy, they were a confirmation that the room you thought was yours was never really yours. The discretion you paid for was always conditional. Someone, somewhere, was always watching; always waiting to share what they saw.

The hosts should be arrested. And the rest of us should sit with the discomfort of knowing that we could be the victims. Before picking the spec in their eyes, first deal with the log in yours. Because he who has not sinned is lying!

—TheKat