

Domestic Gossip

There's saying people like to quote when walking through older homes, "If only these walls could talk." While it seems like it'd be a wonderful gift to hear the stories of a home's previous occupants. In reality most houses are terrible gossips that like to share all the little secrets people thought safe within their walls. This gift of speaking with the soul of a house isn't going to save the world but it does make being a house inspector much more interesting.

I was meeting a nice couple about putting their small cottage style home up on the market. The two women, Coleen and Ria, were successful career women looking to upgrade from their 2-bedroom starter home to something with a little more room to grow. I toured the house with the two ladies, asking questions and taking notes about the house. The house was built in the early 1900s and sat on a rather large lot just outside of town. Their nearest neighbor was another older home roughly 1,000 feet down the quite dirt road. Coleen and Ria raved about the house and how it was wonderful find for their first home together.

"I see there's a little water damage along the bathroom wall. You should get that repaired or else any preceptive buyer is going to use that as leverage." I said, taking a quick snapshot with my phone.

"Oh yeah. We had a pipe break on us one day. We tried to mop it up as fast as we could, but water just got everywhere." Coleen answered.

"When I was shopping around for home insurance, I didn't even think about flood coverage as where up on a hill away from any flood plains." Ria added.

It was while Coleen and Ria were discussing getting a quote to repair the flood damage walls that I heard another voice chime in.

"Burst pipe?! Nah honey, my pipes are all good. Got a full remodel of my goods a few years back before these to ninnies moved in." The voice stated.

"If it wasn't a burst pipe, what caused this much water damage? A bad roof?" I asked under my breath.

"It was those to ladies who caused all that damage. Look, I'm an old house and I've seen all of nonsense go on within my walls but now I can I've seen everything with those two living here." The house continued. "All that water is because Miss Ria over there decided to shove a shower hose up Miss Coleen's ass and turn the water on high. The next you know Coleen is blowing up and filling the entire bathroom until the inevitable happens. I swear the flood was at least two inches deep."

"That story matches the damage more than if a pipe had just burst in this room" I thought as I was leaned down to the floor to better judge the damage. This kind of behavior wasn't uncommon, expansion kinks by their natures get out of hand. I heard houses talk about how their

occupants blew each other up for fun or experimented in various growth enhancements. The homes would complain about how the sudden expansion would put undue weight on their foundations or how a ballooning participant applied so much pressure that they nearly knocked down the walls.

“Was this a common occurrence? The two of them causing a flood?” I whispered.

“They only flooded the bathroom that one time. Thank the stars, they learned their lesson and didn’t try that again. They have messed around in every room though, so that water damage isn’t the only thing they’ve done to me.” It said. I knew that if this house could have a face, it definitely be giving me a disapproving look about the two ladies behavior.

I continued the inspection into the second bedroom which the two had converted into a shared office. It was spacious and well decorated with a desk for each on opposite walls, the tall ceiling made the office feel much larger than the floor plan would have you believe.

“This office is a good selling point for this place. The buyer could keep it as is or convert it into a playroom or den.” I quipped taking in the interior design.

“Yeah. Since we only had two bedrooms, we thought it would be a good idea to turn this room into a shared space for our different hobbies.” Chimed Ria.

Again, the voice from the walls spoke up as I began taking a closer look around the room.

“Hey, inspector. Take a closer look at the ceiling. It doesn’t look like much from down there but trust me, you’re going to want to see.”

I craned my neck up at the ceiling taking in the off-white color and crown molding. As I walked around the room, I saw what the house was trying to bring to my attention, a series of cracks in the plaster radiating from a single point. I walked over to an electrical outlet to check the grounding and continue my discussion with the house.

“Let me guess, they went a little wild again?” I muttered plugging in my outlet test.

“Oh, how did you guess?” The house said in the most sarcastic tone. “They decided to test out a commercial size canister of compressed helium. And by ‘test’ I mean Coleen strapped hose to Ria’s mouth and let her have her fill.”

“Then she grew to so large that she applied enough pressure to create those cracks in the ceiling” I said testing another outlet.

“Close. If you look carefully at the crown molding along the ceiling, you might notice that sections don’t match.” The house said.

I informed Coleen and Ria that I wanted to inspect the lighting and fetched a ladder from my truck. Standing up on the ladder I was able to get a better look at the molding along the edge of ceiling. From down below everything looked fine but up close it was easy to see that sections of

the molding were replaced with similar but not matching pieces. The mismatch molding was merely aesthetic; the real issue was the damage new molding and plaster were trying to cover up.

I continued my planned inspection, testing every outlet, examining the windows, and checking the foundation. All while I continued my conversation with the house to get more information.

“Compression due to Ria filling the room wouldn’t cause the damage I saw. What did they do?” I asked.

“You were partially correct. Miss Ria did do some minor damage by filling that room, but the majority of that damage was due to her explosion. She shallowed so much helium that she literally detonated, blowing out the windows and cracking every wall in that room.” The house’s contempt was palpable.

“I’m working with a pair of habitual bursters” I grumbled.

“At least you’re just working with them. I’ve had to feel every rumble, rattle, and shockwave those two create during their love making. Honestly, I just want some new occupants that aren’t going to shake me off my foundation.” The house complained.

I sighed and went about completing the examination of the premises, all the while the house complained in my ear. When I finally finished, I excused myself and went to my truck to type up my findings. I sent the report to Ria’s inbox then went inside to explain everything. At first the two followed along with no complaints but their calm demeanors were replaced with anxiety as soon as I began explaining the damage I found around the house.

I didn’t outright state that the damage I found around the house was due to the couple’s excessive love making, but I made it clear the damage wasn’t just normal wear and tear.

“It’s my professional opinion that you get the items I’ve mentioned further inspected and repaired. I could not recommend this house be put on the market in its current condition.” I said.

“But repairs to the structural walls in the bedroom and the water damage to the foundation are probably going to cost tens of thousands of dollars.” Coleen said turning to Ria who was still going over the report.

“We just have to admit we’re cooked.” Ria said handing my tablet back. “We both know our recklessness caused all of this damage, and this is what we get. We’ll just have to put off moving to a bigger place until we can fully repair this house.” Ria continued, accepting the situation.

Ria walked me to the door after paying the invoice. I offered her my card if they needed help finding a good home repair company. After I said my goodbyes and headed toward my truck, Ria stopped to ask me one last question.

“How did you figure out the windows had been blown out? I had new panes of glass installed after they broke, so they should have looked perfectly fine.” She inquired.

I paused, she was right, a normal inspector probably wouldn't have noticed the subtle clue that the windowpanes had been replaced.

"The glass in the windows was too new to be the original glass. Normally glass forms small streaks as it stretches and ages." I said, trying my best to lie through my teeth.

She shrugged finding my lie to her satisfaction.

"Also, we're all adults here. If you suspect we're being too rough during our 'warmups' you could just say it. I think if we're leaving evidence behind, we deserve to know." She added.

From behind Ria the house shouted, "Yeah, tell these two nymphomaniacs to calm down and stop trying to blow me apart as much as they like blowing themselves up."

I smiled and simply shook my head and said, "I do my best to be professional, but I'll try remember next time you need a home inspection."

Hello dear reader,

This was a fun little story I wrote up after being away from writing to a bit. It's difficult trying to type when you have a broken hand but I'm back at it again with this short to help me work my writing muscles. For this short I used a prompt generator which gave me the prompt "A character can talk to houses". This got me thinking about how expansion/inflation stories usually don't concern themselves about the possible damage expansion could have on people's homes. So why not write about a character that hears all the dirty laundry people have via their homes, almost secondhand voyeurism. With this short in the bag, I hope to increase my productivity again and get more work out for people to enjoy. As always, I appreciate any comments and suggestions from you, and I look forward to talking again in my next piece.

-Cyanban

cyanban.bsky.social

cyanban@proton.me