Hods Home

I'm grateful for the peace that I find within these walls. The daily upkeep and attention it requires seem a small price to pay for my sanctuary.

September 23, 2018 By Jen Hodson

For the last few years, buying a home has been at the top of my bucket list. Having moved around for the better part of 15 years, I never seemed to have my own space. When I graduated from high school, I moved to London and into shared housing. And, let's be honest, you don't move to a big city for the space. After 9 years of dorms and small (but efficient) flats, I moved back to the US. For the next 4 years I would continue to rent. I was astounded by how much more room I had in Baltimore, but it was never truly mine.

And I get it, how privileged I sound to be talking about "space" and "mine." But I'm a cancer who had cancer, and the home is my sanctuary. It's awfully hard to build that sanctuary when you're at the mercy of someone else making the decisions.

After active treatment ended, I was left with a new list, a list of shit I had to deal with. And none of it was part of my bucket list. Whereas once I saved for a down payment and organic produce, I was now saving for my out of pocket maximum and eating ramen out of fear. Not to mention the mental issues I had, the PTSD, the change in my personality, all the medications that I needed to try and then go off of and then try again. It was a whirlwind.

But in that whirlwind, something became crystal fucking clear — I wanted my sanctuary. I needed my sanctuary. I would sacrifice all other wants for it. So I started saving again, I started researching and I made moves. And eventually, I ended up with my house. Does it have everything I wanted? No, but it has enough, and I'm grateful.

K, so, that dreamy aspect being said. HOME OWNERSHIP IS A STRESSFUL BALL OF NIGHTMARES, BUGS AND LEAKS. Not only that, BUT WHY DO BAR STOOLS COST SO MUCH, WHEN DID SHEETS BECOME A PREMIUM? WTF IS A SHUTOFF VALVE?!

I really could go on forever. I've owned my home for just over 2 months and I have gained a lifetime of knowledge, it feels like. I have built two couches, two stools, two book shelves and an entertainment stand. The last one being a gift from my mom, that I built incorrectly (TWICE) and put nail holes in the front of. But, on the bright side, I now know how to use wood filler and stain cover up, so hit me up if you need some help there.

Oh, and since the house had been on the market for a few months, there was a lovely bit of insect

activity around and about. Spiders in every basement corner, some lovely cockroaches (don't judge me, it's humid, a city and they happen) trying to infiltrate my kitchen, and fruit flies. Soooooooo many fruit flies. I think now they're finally gone. Oh no, just kidding, saw one right now.

Oh and how about when my entire closet shelf ripped out from the wall with everything on it? That was fun. That was reallllllly fun.

And when it rains, it pours. Literally, from my ceiling, it was pouring. About a month and half into home ownership I decided to take my first proper bath. I had filled the tub up before for Chewie baths and the home inspection, but I had never been in it all the way. Cue the music, the book, the candles, the bubble bath. I was set for self care mode and nothing else. After a nice relaxing bath, I went downstairs to get some tea and OH MY GOODNESS WHY IS THERE WATER EVERYWHERE. Up I looked and boom, leak patterns everywhere under the tub.

I think I cried for hours that night, I was tired, I had been working so hard on the house and plumbing is an expensive thing to order up. I called the contractors who worked on the house, they weren't much help. And to be honest, I've seen some things in the house that make me weary of their ability to fix things properly. So I bit the bullet and I called a plumber.

In they came with their confident swagger and handy dandy tools. They tested everything and couldn't find a problem. I asked them about the overflow and they said nothing seemed to be amiss there. So they cut two holes in my ceiling to check the pipes. Filled the tub up and nothing happened. They told me it was a fluke, a one off, try to take a bath again and call them if anything weird happens, but I would still need to pay their call-out fee…

So I did, and I prepped myself for bath number 2, holes in my ceiling still open. As I got into the full tub, music blaring, I could hear the avalanche of water pouring down onto my hardwood floors. Should I have put towels down? Most definitely. Did I? No. Call it a test of faith.

Tl;dr, the plumbers came back. It was the overflow, it had been installed completely incorrectly. The thing I asked them to check initially, was the actual issue, with no need to put two holes in my ceiling. They did, however, need to put a third hole in by the tub to fix it. And somehow that made the price jump trifold. You know your girl played the cancer card and refused though. And we met halfway.

I am finding that owning a home has created a new relationship in my life, one with a structural foundation. I'm constantly listening, learning, and trying everything I can to make this investment a healthy one. But I'm constantly afraid of what might happen next, beyond my control, that I can't afford. Oh, there it is, the parallels to cancer. I knew it'd be in there.

I'm also finding that owning a home has solidified how many amazing people I have in my life. From my ex (and good friend) coming over to patch up my drywall and paint my house. To my dad researching ways to help me from NY, to all the suggestions the IG community has been giving me during leakgate 2018. I'm not alone in this at all, and I am so grateful. Oh and patience, I have learned that patience really is a virtue.

I’m also grateful for the peace that I find within these walls. And even though it will take daily upkeep and attention, it seems a small price to pay for my sanctuary. One that I’ve been dreaming of for years.

Oh, and Chewie pooped in the basement on the first night, so he’s into it too.

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