

## Ms Pearl

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Although Ms Pearl and I are very good friends now, that didn't come easily. Our present relationship is the result of hard work, patience, and time. I first met her when I started working at her mansion, the luxurious and renowned Baldwin mansion. After my interview with the housekeeper, I was surprised to receive a call, just two hours later, informing me that I met all the requirements to be Ms Pearl's new butler. Apparently, the previous one had resigned quite suddenly. Though no one explicitly said why, rumours suggested that he had struggled with certain... peculiarities of Ms Pearl's temperament. And I completely understand that. Don't get me wrong, Her Grace—as she likes to be addressed—may be a highly popular and well-loved figure in the neighbourhood, but she can be quite distant, demanding, and judgmental at first.

On my first day, the housekeeper introduced me to Ms Pearl. She was elegantly seated on her favourite velvet sofa in the living room, exuding refinement, adorned with her distinctive pearls and diamonds necklace—an exquisite piece which any duchess would envy. Immediately, I found myself unsure of how to approach her; after all, one doesn't engage with high society on a daily basis. In Ms Pearl's case, however, it wasn't just her status that made me hesitant, it was the way in which my mere presence seemed to bother her. Her captivating, almond, green eyes made everything worse; I felt as if she could read my every thought as she scanned me from head to toe. Then, without a word, she turned and glided out of the room, with an air of superiority, and leaving an uncomfortable silence behind.

In the early days of my employment, I decided to give her space. I didn't want to be a nuisance for her and spoil this unique job opportunity. Unfortunately for me, I had to spend most of the day in her company since—in contrast to ordinary people—Ms Pearl has no need to work. Therefore, she enjoys most of her time indulging in a pampered routine of walks, naps and demands. Also, I realised that she finds great pleasure in quietly watching the world from her large bay window. The housekeeper explained to me that, as she is getting older, this might remind her of the good old days when her beloved companion would go hunting quails alongside the hounds—an activity very much enjoyed by the English upper class.

Over the course of several weeks, I came to learn much about Her Grace. I grew accustomed to her silent entrances, no longer startled by her unexpected presence. I discovered the ideal temperature for her traditional English drink before bedtime—neither too hot nor too cold, just the perfect warmth to match her refined palate. I also learned to read her expressive eyes, realising that I didn't need a single word to communicate with her; a slight tilt of her head or a faint sound was often enough to anticipate her thoughts and, especially, her demands. Gradually, our coexistence evolved into companionship; complaints and indifference faded away, and I began to hear her purring with satisfaction more and more often in my presence.

As I mentioned before, I understand why the previous butler resigned. Ms Pearl can be difficult to deal with; she is undoubtedly a demanding boss. But perhaps we are being too hard on her; after all, Ms Pearl is just a cat.

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