

CREATIVE WRITING

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'Dogs have masters, cats have staff'

Michael was a dog lover whilst his intended bride, Jackie, was a servant to two cats. Both families thought that, whilst the two were obviously made for each other, that combining the households was doomed.

Each made an attempt to accommodate the needs of the other. Jackie could be found most weekends roaming the countryside far and wide, several paces behind Mike and many yards behind Brendan the Irish Wolfhound. Jackie was not keen on the great outdoors, she hated the damp, well it was Cumbria, the smell and the rain. Most of all she hated the cleansing process that took place before Brendan was allowed back in the house. On the rare occasions they had used her car she had bemoaned the smell and dirt that emanated from the back of the car. Admittedly her tiny Fiat could barely keep the dog on the back seat. The wretched animal tended to pant down the back of her neck in a most unseemly manner.

Michael could not understand her problem. His work kept him cooped up in an office during the week so that Brendan's walks were taken at ungodly hours, often in the dark. So weekends were a glorious change whatever the weather.

Jackie was not too pleased, when they did a joint supermarket shop, to see how much money Brendan consumed, the amount of food the dog ate defied belief. She felt her whole life revolved round the smelly monster. Her cats had a special diet but the cost was a tiny fraction of that of Brendan's.

One evening Jackie said they would have to have a frank discussion before they lived together.

Naturally Michael was upset. He had been aware of a certain atmosphere but thought things would look up when the better weather came. Most of Jackie's problems seemed related to Brendan's propensity for finding mud and decaying carcass. Fingers crossed thought he, ever the optimist. Anyway what about her b***** cats?

'Brendan seems to rule our lives. We cannot even go away without him.'

'I can't help that. He is banned from all the local kennels. He is a jumper. He is uninsurable.'

'I know you love him Mike, but really he rules our lives.'

'Rules our lives! What about the cats?'

'Persephone and Hades are no trouble, no trouble at all'.

That's another thing, why do they have to have such fancy names.'

'Those are their Sunday best names. When I'm calling them in at night it is simply 'Percy' and 'H'.

And that sounds sane I suppose.'

'Look, they are no bother. They don't need all the walking and cleaning the beast from Hibernia needs.'

'I've seen the beautician's bills. I thought cats were supposed to look after themselves.'

The couple glared at each other for several minutes.

Jackie reached for Michael's hand. 'Love, do you think this is going to work. They haven't all even lived together yet.'

'Hang on a moment, I'll go and make us a coffee.'

'Don't let the cats out whatever you do.'

'Can you come in here Jackie?'

When Jackie entered the kitchen she found Brendan stretched out in his outsize dog basket with Percy and H snuggled up under a huge hairy leg. All were in the land of nod. Eventually H opened an eye and gazed at his mistress and her intended. He purred in a language that only Percy understood.

'Don't worry about us Mistress mine. Brendan is under our control, living with him will be a piece of cake. He is naturally subservient. Did you not know 'dogs have masters, including cats, but *we* have staff'

Jean Cowgill