

For recent years, I have been living in ease with my husband. We have no pets, so we are totally free from any nuisance and disturbance. We can travel anytime when we have free time. We can concentrate on our own life, cherishing our work, study and leisure. Although we reckon animals are charming, we've been doing our best on ourselves.

Last month, a guinea pig came to my house. My mother-in-law asked me if I could care for her pet during her fifteen-day visit to Britain. I said yes - I must have said yes - because I knew how much my mother-in-law loves the pet, and I know how deeply she would feel sad if I refused.

The pet is named Pooh. One afternoon, she came all the way from a neighboring town. To tell the truth, I was reluctant to welcome the new comer at first. However, to my amazement, the moment I met her, I could not help thinking how cute she was. She was covered with large auburn and dark spots on her snow-white body. Her tiny ebony eyes are like precious jewels. Something warm and pleasant were welling up in my heart. I wished to build close friendship with Pooh.

In spite of my expectation, there were lots of rocks and pebbles all the way. The first day, Pooh was like a helpless wild rabbit that faced with a fierce lion on the center of the boundless prairie. Her eyes were about to water when I came near her. She was shivering in spite of comfortable room temperature. Confronted with her stubbornness, I gave up communicating with her. I said to her: "I am so busy to play with you. Good night."

The next day, I saw a slight change of her attitude. The eyes appealing her fear were somewhat disappearing. She didn't shiver at all. She was likely to get back her normal life, eating grass and drinking water. She seemed to get accustomed with me. I came to think that I could give her a piece of an apple from me. In this case, I remembered the old proverb: make hay while the sun shines. That was successful, though she took it the corner of her cage. I thanked a lot the predecessors' wisdom while I saw her devouring the fruit energetically. However, this was still far from a friendly relationship.

After about a week, Pooh was about to become a true member of our family. When I call her, she approached toward me with a big smile on her tiny face. I smiled back to her

cordially as mothers did to their kids. And in reward, I never forgot to give her favorite fruit and vegetable. Even when my husband called her, she approached toward him, she hesitated a little bit, though. I believed we could share affections mutually with Pooh.

On the tenth day of her stay, an incident occurred. When I tried to give her a piece of lettuce as usual, she didn't get closer to me. She didn't show her interest, ignoring my greeting. She was completely in her world, which I could not enter. After a half hour, I tried to communicate with her again. This time, it was an easy task. Pooh came near me soon after she acknowledged me. But, I wondered why there was the disparity. Analyzing her reaction so far, I realized that she came to me if she was hungry, and she did not come to me if she was full. Our friendship that I believed genuine was turned out to be a brittle friendship clamped to food. How stupid I was!

To my astonishment, although I begun to doubt her affections to me, I can't help amusing her - I simply adore her. I was simply keen on seeing her face filled with delight.

The last day of her stay, she left my home with her owner. Pooh didn't at all express her loneliness, ignoring my devotion to her. I've decided that I go back to comfortable life with my husband for a while.

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