

THE SECRETARY'S PRAYER



Give me please, *O Lord*, the wisdom of a Judge, the patience of Job and the hide of an elephant.

Give my fingers such speed that I can finish tonight the mail I should have done yesterday. Give me such acute hearing that I can understand the dictation my boss mumbles out of the window while jingling the change in his/her pocket.

Give me an uncanny insight and an encyclopaedic memory for dates and anniversaries he/she has never even mentioned and meetings he/she forgets to record so that I can remind him/her of them. And give me the diplomacy of an ambassador to get seats for trains, planes and theatres which he/she was so sure he/she had told me about yesterday.

Help me correct his/her spelling and even worse phrasing so that he reads my letters and glows with pride at his/her own good English – and let me suffer no pangs if he/she scrawls alterations in ink which I could so easily have dubbed in on my machine.

Caution me to remember that if one day he/she feels off colour and barks, snarls, or sneers, I must retain a gentle, friendly smile no matter how well or ill I may happen to feel.

Help me to have a memory three years long. By some small miracle let me be able to do all things at once – answer three telephones at the same time and type a letter that ‘must go today’ even though I know it won’t get signed until tomorrow.

Give me knowledge of a university professor with my junior certificate of education. Help me to understand and carry out all instructions without any explanation.

Let me know, without being told, where my boss is or when he/she will be back. When he/she happens to disappear without a trace just when something desperately urgent crops up, please give me the qualities of Sherlock Holmes so I may track him/her down.

Could you then please, *O Lord*, extend your mercies and throw in just one extra lesson on how to combine the duties of Secretary, Chairwoman, Hostess, Diplomat, Accountant, Receptionist, Filing Clerk, Booking Clerk, Cloakroom Attendant and General Nurse.

Amen.

