

Chapter 21 - "Like Master Like Man."

Chapter 21 - "Like Master Like Man." begins with a wry commentary on the frustrations voiced by many housewives about the perceived decline in servant quality. These complaints often overlook the complexities of domestic service and focus instead on minor inconveniences or personality flaws. The irony lies in how much is expected of servants with so little reciprocated in understanding or regard. Unlike in earlier times when household staff were viewed almost as extended family, the modern arrangement, particularly in America, has become purely transactional. Personal connections have faded, replaced by contractual obligations and social distance. This detachment strips the role of humanity, making the master-servant dynamic less collaborative and more adversarial.

The author examines how this impersonal relationship erodes mutual respect. Servants, who live within the walls of a home yet remain socially invisible, witness their employers' private habits, tempers, and inconsistencies—details often hidden from the public eye. Over time, this exposure breeds either silent judgment or quiet imitation. The result is a type of mimicry that reflects not the best of the employer's character, but often their worst. In households lacking moral clarity, the staff absorb vanity, gossip, or indulgence as normal behavior. This mirroring effect highlights a central argument of the chapter: domestic workers are shaped not only by their duties but by the personal conduct of those they serve. If employers wish to see integrity in their staff, they must first model it themselves.

Chapter 21 - "Like Master Like Man." also explores the psychological toll of being both omnipresent and overlooked. Servants occupy a unique vantage point—they hear what's whispered behind closed doors and notice what's meant to remain unseen. This position gives them access to truths employers often deny even to themselves. Yet this knowledge is rarely acknowledged, and their insights are undervalued, if not

entirely dismissed. The master believes himself unknown, while the servant quietly understands more than he's ever given credit for. The lack of honest recognition from employers creates resentment and distrust, not due to wages or work, but from emotional invisibility. It's not servitude itself that is degrading, but the erasure of dignity that frequently accompanies it.

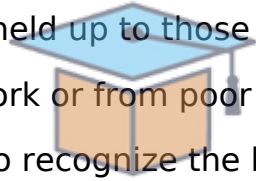
The divide between social classes is deepened when domestic labor is performed without mutual regard. Many households increasingly depend on immigrant workers who, due to economic necessity, accept roles that offer little room for advancement or voice. This shift introduces cultural and language barriers, adding new layers to existing power imbalances. Employers often regard their staff as tools rather than individuals, and in doing so, create a cycle of discontent. Education and growing awareness have also made it harder to find individuals willing to perform such roles indefinitely. As upward mobility increases, the pool of long-term domestic workers decreases, especially those who remain content under disrespectful conditions. It's not laziness or incompetence that drives this shortage—it's the simple refusal to endure being undervalued.

Chapter 21 - "Like Master Like Man." contends that this friction is not just personal—it's systemic. The structure of domestic service pits two groups against one another in a daily performance of inequality. One commands, the other obeys; one relaxes, the other serves. Even in moments of apparent harmony, the imbalance lingers. The chapter argues that employers who complain of untrustworthy or ungrateful servants often fail to reflect on the atmosphere they themselves create. If loyalty, respect, and professionalism are not extended downward, they will not flourish upward. The dysfunction in these households doesn't begin with incompetence—it begins with condescension.

Modern studies on workplace dynamics echo these points. A 2022 report by the Economic Policy Institute found that domestic workers in the U.S.—predominantly women and immigrants—are among the least protected and most undervalued labor groups. Despite playing essential roles in caregiving and household management, they

often lack access to fair wages, healthcare, and basic job security. These conditions persist not due to skill deficiencies but because of longstanding societal attitudes that diminish their contributions. The parallels to the chapter are striking, underscoring how historical patterns still shape contemporary realities. When labor is stripped of respect, performance naturally declines—not because people are incapable, but because motivation erodes in environments where appreciation is absent.

In closing, Chapter 21 - "Like Master Like Man." isn't merely a critique of domestic staff—it's a mirror held up to those who employ them. It asks whether dissatisfaction stems from poor work or from poor leadership. The chapter encourages empathy, urging employers to recognize the human element in service relationships. To inspire trust, one must offer it. To expect excellence, one must lead by example. Through this lens, domestic harmony isn't achieved by demanding better staff—it's cultivated by being a better master.



Summary