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The Efficient Baxter

In describing Rupert Baxter as efficient, you did not overestimate him. He was essentially that. Technically but a salaried subordinate, he had become by degrees, owing to the limp amiability of his employer, the real master of the house. He was the brains of Blandings, the man at the switch, the person in charge, and the pilot, so to speak, who weathered the storm. Lord Emsworth left everything
5 to Baxter, only asking to be allowed to potter in peace.

"Baxter, my dear fellow, I've lost my glasses. My glasses. I've mislaid them. I cannot think where they have gone to. You haven't seen them anywhere by any chance?"

"Yes, Lord Emsworth," replied the secretary, "they're hanging down your back."

"Down my back? Why, bless my soul!" His lordship tested the statement and found it – like all
10 Baxter's statements – accurate. "Thank you, Baxter, thank you. You are invaluable."

"The car will be at the door," said Baxter with quiet firmness, "at two sharp."

"Car? What car?"

"The car to take you to the station."

"Station? What station?"

15 Rupert Baxter preserved his calm. There were times when he found his employer a little trying, but he never showed it.

"You have perhaps forgotten, Lord Emsworth, that you arranged with Lady Constance to go to London this afternoon."

"Go to London!" gasped Lord Emsworth, appalled. "In weather like this? With a thousand things
20 to attend in the garden? Why should I go to London? I hate London."

"You arranged with Lady Constance that you would give Mr McTodd lunch to-morrow at your club."

"Who the devil is Mr McTodd?"

"The well-known Canadian poet."

"Never heard of him."

25 "Lady Constance has long been a great admirer of his work. She wrote inviting him, should he ever come to England, to pay a visit to Blandings. He is now in London, and is to come down to-morrow for two weeks. Lady Constance's suggestion was that, as a compliment to Mr McTodd's eminence in the world of literature, you should meet him in London and bring him back here yourself."

30 Lord Emsworth remembered now. He also remembered that this positively infernal scheme had not been his sister Constance's in the first place. It was Baxter who had made the suggestion, and Constance had approved. This fellow Baxter was becoming a dashed infliction. He wished he could get rid of the man. But where could he find an adequate successor? That was the trouble. With all his drawbacks, Baxter was efficient. Nevertheless, for a moment Lord Emsworth toyed with the pleasant dream of dismissing him.