

# Pepper

By C. Jade Wyton

*A large and untrained mimic named Pepper finds herself reaching the end of her owner's patience.*

***Contains descriptions of animal abuse.***

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Pepper was a good girl.

A very, *very* good girl!

She loved her papa! And she loved her house! And she loved barking at the neighbours when they got home from work!

Her papa didn't love her barking, though. So she would try not to do it.

Though most times when she heard the neighbour's car she would get too excited and forget; tearing through the house to get to the front window so she could cry and howl and bark bark bark! With her deep, powerful GRORFS that echoed so loud off the walls and shelves she would always seem to accidentally knock over.

She often forgot how big she was. Much bigger than when her papa had first bought her.

She had been so cute and little at first. Way back when she was a baby, she could fit in just *one* of her papa's hands!

She'd been no bigger than a teddy bear; which had always been her favourite form when she was young.

Now, though, she had grown.

So big!

So, so big!

As big as her papa's armchair.

And she was very proud of herself for it.

She was so big and strong! Yes she was!

And nobody would ever break into the house without her say so!

No, no!

She protected the house! Yes she did!

'GRORF!' she barked, placing her front two legs on the window and wiggling her table-shaped backside wildly. 'GRORF GRORF! RRRRRRRRORP! OURP! GRORF!'

*My house! Mine! Mine! Stay away, neighbours! Go into your own houses! Keep away from mine!*

'Pepper! Shut up!' Papa cried across the house.

'GRORF!' she continued. 'GRORF ORF! GRARP!'

'PEPPER!'

Papa's study door slammed shut and Pepper jumped down from the windowsill to turn to her papa with a happy bark.

*Papa! Papa! Papa— Oh no!*

Pepper backed away; making herself as small as possible as her papa approached her with a frown and smacked her with his rolled up newspaper.

‘Enough!’ he barked at her. ‘Bad girl! Bad mimic! Be *quiet!*’

Pepper gave a low whine as she was hit again before retreating to the corner where her blanket sat.

‘Bad mimic!’ Papa scolded, glaring at her from across the room. ‘Bad!’

*Bad mimic?*

She gave another whine and curled up tight, changing her form from a table into a more compacted armchair.

‘You sit and you *stay!*’ Papa ordered before turning and heading back to his study.

Pepper let out a whimper and did as she was told.

She wasn’t a bad mimic.... She was a good girl.

She was a very, very good girl....

So she would sit and be quiet. Just like her papa told her to.

*Sit.*

*Sit and be quiet.*

*Sit....*

*Sit....*

*Sit....*

The sound of the neighbour’s kids rushing into the street caught Pepper’s attention and she leapt to her feet, instinctively letting out a round of barks and howls as she bolted back to the window.

‘GRORF! GRORF! AW-GROHW! ORP!’

Papa’s door flew open loudly and Pepper immediately retreated back to her corner.

She let out a whimper as her papa stomped back into the room and turned to glare at her with his arms crossed.

‘*Aheem...*’ Pepper whined. ‘*Nnnmm...*’

Papa just sighed. Then he motioned for Pepper to follow him. ‘Pepper. Car. *Now.*’

*Car?*

Pepper felt her entire body perk up.

*Car?*

*Car?!*

*Car!*

‘GRORF!’ she barked, leaping up and bounding around her papa in excitement. ‘GRORF! ORP! GRARP!’

*Oh!*

*Oh it was so exciting!*

Papa hadn’t taken her for a drive in *such* a long time!

She was so excited!

Pepper hurried after her papa, barking the entire time as he led her to the garage and ushered her into the back of the car.

‘Sit still,’ he ordered, before climbing in the front seat and pressing the button to open the garage door.

The sound was loud and exciting, and it took all of Pepper’s self-control not to

bark in joy.

She would be a good girl! Yes she would!

She would show her papa she was a good girl! Because she loved her papa!

Snuffling her nose against the window, Pepper watched as the houses passed them by.

They drove past the neighbour's kids playing in their front yard, and past the speed limit sign, and past the park.

They drove past everything, and Pepper loved every moment of it.

She got to see so much, sitting in this car with her papa!

Cats and squirrels and kids! And signs and trees! And other cars!

Though, the further they drove, the less Pepper saw.

Less children. And less cats. And less cars.

And there were even less houses.

Soon it was all trees.

Pepper licked her lips as she stared out into the woods.

It was so different! And so interesting!

And when Papa pulled over onto the side of the road she felt herself wiggling with excitement.

He was going to let her outside to play! Just like he used to do when she was little and he would take her on walks!

Oh, she couldn't wait!

As soon as the door was opened she bolted out of the car and down the incline to the edge of the woods, where she turned into an armchair again and wiggled her whole body and *bark bark barked* for her papa to follow her.

But he didn't. Instead he closed the car door and motioned for Pepper to sit.

'Sit,' he ordered, firmly.

Pepper obeyed (of course she did! She was good girl) and settled down on the grass with a happy *grurp!*

'Stay,' Papa ordered. '*Stay....*'

*Yes, Papa!* Pepper panted, a loud grumbling purr shaking the ground at her feet. *I'll stay! I'm a good girl! And I will sit and stay, just like you've told me to!*

'Hmp,' Papa gave a grunt, and then slipped back into the front seat of his car.

*Oh?*

Pepper cocked the cushion her eyes were on as the car began to slowly move, and she rose to her feet—

'*Sit!*' Papa ordered from the window, causing Pepper to hurriedly plant her behind back on the ground. 'Stay!'

Pepper did as she was told; not moving as her papa and his car turned around and headed back the way they'd come.

*Oh, how strange....*

How unusual!

She thought that must be like when she would be left at the vet, and wondered how long Papa would be gone for before coming to pick her up again.

*I'm a good girl,* she purred to herself. *A very good girl. I will sit! And I will wait for Papa to come back!*

And wait she did.

All day she waited; staring at the road for her papa's car.

*Not that one. That one was red. Papa's car is silver....*

*Oh, that car was silver, but too small.... Papa has a big car....*

Pepper licked her lips and gave a concerned whine.

The sun was setting, now. And Papa hadn't come back yet.... It was starting to make her feel scared.

Surely her papa would be back soon?

He knew that she didn't like being outside in the dark. She didn't even like going into the backyard to use the toilet, at night! He had to walk her out and stand with her so that nothing scary would be able to get her.

He knew she was scared of the dark.

So... why hadn't he come back yet?

The deep orange light stretched over the tree-line, scratching claw-like shadows into the ground as it cast through the brush.

It sent a chill through the mimic....

But still, Pepper didn't move. No matter how much she wanted to retreat into the forest to hide.

Papa had told her to stay. So she was going to stay.

*I'm a good girl*, Pepper whined, settling down in the grass and licking her lips.  
*I'm a good girl.... Aren't I?*

—END—

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