

I was not aware you were attending with Anna Wintour

Anna Wintour would like us to meet for lunch at The Ritz London, but when I inquire about a table for an FT interview, the restaurant turns me down. A call from one of Wintour's two personal assistants later, and the receptionist emails to apologise: "I was not aware you were attending with Anna Wintour."

Yielding unprocurable tables must be one of the many perks of being Vogue's longstanding editor-in-chief and the inspiration for Meryl Streep's imperious, fur-swathed lead in the 2006 film

heavy brocade curtains. Just as I place my handbag on the proffered footstool, a black-suited waiter appears and informs me I am sitting in Anna's preferred seat, will I please move to the other? "It's best if these things start off smoothly," he warns.

Are all The Ritz's VIP guests treated

reported not to her but to Liberman.

From Liberman, Wintour learnt "to keep meetings very short. He was very, very decisive. He understood creativity, he nurtured it, he valued it and he was also excellent at separating his private personal life [from] his work life."

He had, she recalls laughingly, "a desk with nothing on it, except I learnt later, a buzzer underneath, so that when he was done with you, which was in about five minutes, his assistant could come in and whisk you away."

The waiter returns with a modest

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