

ICE WATER PL—!

By FANNIE HURST

This is the first installment of another of Fannie Hurst's fascinating stories. There's a surprise in this one—but it doesn't come until the last chapter on Saturday.

CHAPTER I

WHEN the two sides of every story are told, Henry VIII may establish an alibi or two, Shylock and the public school system may be found to be and melt that too solid pound of flesh, and Xantippe herself the sturdy man than Socrates, give ready lie to what is called the shrew in her. Landladies, whole black-bombazined creations of them—oh, so long a board—may rise in one indictment of the Boarder: The scarred bureau front and match-scratched wall paper; the empty trunk nailed to the floor in security for the unpaid bill; cigarette-burnt sheets and the terror of sudden fire; the silent new comer in the third floor back huddled over one night in handcuffs; the long sobs of the blonde girl so suddenly terrified of life about to be and wringing her ringless hands in the fourth floor hallway; the smell of escaping gas and the tightly packed keyhole; the unsuspected flutes that lurk in the boarder's trunk; towels, that peculiar and endless pattern of the lodger; the high cost of liver and dried peaches, of canned corn and round steak!

Tired bombazine procession, wrapped in the greasy odors of years of carpet-sweeping and emptying shops, airing the gassy slit of room after the corner, and padding from floor to floor on a mission of towels and towels and towels! Sometimes climbing from floor to floor, a still warm supply of them looped over one arm, Mrs. Kaufman, who wore bombazine, but unspotted and with crisp net frills at the throat, and upon whose self-looking face the years had written their obituary in invisible ink, would sit suddenly, there in the narrow gloom of her halls, head against the balustrade. Offener than the Katz boy from the third floor front would come licketty-clapping down the stairs and past her, jumping the last four steps of each flight.

"Irving, quit your noise in the hall."
"Aw!"
"Ain't you ashamed, a big boy like you, and Mrs. Suss with her new 'galia?"
"Aw!"—the slam of a door clipping off this insolence.

After a while she would resume her climb.
And yet in Mrs. Kaufman's private boarding house in West Eighty-ninth street, one of a breastwork of brown-stone fronts, lined up stoop for stoop, story for story, and ash-can for ash-can, there were few enough greasy odors except upon the weekly occasion of Monday's boiled dinner; and, whatever the status of liver and dried peaches, canned corn and round steak, her menus remained static—so static that in the gas-light basement dining-room and at a remote end of the long, well-surrounded table Mrs. Katz, with her napkin tucked well under her third chin, turned wot to from the prodding husband at her right to her next neighbor, shielding her remark with her hand.

"Am I right, Mrs. Finshirer? I just said to my husband in the five years we been here she should just give us once a change from Friday-night lamb and noodles."
"Say, you should complain yet! With me it's six and a half years day after tomorrow, Easter Day, since I asked myself that question first."
"Even my Irving says to me tonight up in the room, jumping up and down on the hearth like he had four legs."
"I heard him, Mrs. Katz, on my ceiling like he had eight legs."
"Mamma," he says, "guess why I feel like saying 'ha, ha, ha.'"
"Saying what?"

"Sheep talk, Mrs. Finshirer, b-a-a, like a sheep goes."
"Oh!"
"Cause I got so many Friday nights' lamb in me, Mamma," he said. Quick like a flash that child is."

Mrs. Finshirer dipped her head and her glance, all her drooping features pulled even farther down at their corners. "I ain't the one to complain, Mrs. Katz, and I always say, when you come right down to it maybe Mrs. Kaufman's house is as good as the next one, but—"

"I wish, though, Mrs. Finshirer, you would hear what Mrs. Spritz says at her boarding-house they get for breakfast; fried—"

"You can imagine, Mrs. Katz, since my poor husband's death, how much appetite I got left; but I say, Mrs. Katz, just for the principle of the thing, it would not hurt one Mrs. Kaufman should give somebody else besides her own daughter and Vetsburg always the white meat from everything, ain't it?"

"It's a shame before the boarders! She knows, Mrs. Finshirer, how my head and neck break from the chicken. You think once he gets it. No, I always tell him, not till chickens come double-breasted like overcoats can he eat in this house, with Vetsburg such a star boarder."
"Last night's chicken, let me tell you, I don't wish it to a dog! Such a piece of food what goes on; there's one good swallow."
Mrs. Katz adjusted with greater security the expanse of white napkin across her ample bosom. "God rings and a quarter-inch marriage band flashed in and out among the litter of small sub-plated dishes surrounding her, and a round of beef, yet Simon Kaufman, who was born in Newark, posthumously, to a terrified parent with a black ribbon at the throat of her gown, had brought with here from no telling where the sultry eyes and tropical-turned skin of spice-kissed winds. The copulosity of a shag might have been running in the blood of her, yet Simon Kaufman, and Simon Kaufman's father before him, had sold wool remnants to cap-factories on commission.

"Like moving is so easy, if you got two chairs and a hair mattress to take with you. But I always say, Mrs. Katz, I don't blame Mrs. Kaufman herself for what goes on; there's one good woman if there ever was one!"
"They don't come no better or no better looking, my husband always says. 'Say, I tell him, 'she can stand her good looks.'"
"It's that big-headed daughter is more to blame. Did you see yet her in that white suit tonight? Right away the minute they come out she has to have 'em. I'm only surprised she ain't got one of them red rats from Gimp's what is all the fad. Believe me, if not for such ideas, her mother could afford something better as succotash for us for supper."
"It's a shame, let me tell you, that a woman like Mrs. Kaufman can't see for herself such things. God forbid I should ever be so blind to my Irving. I tell you that Ruby has got more than a queen than a boarding-house-keeper's daughter. Spats, yet!"
"Rich girls could be glad to have it always so good."
"I don't say nothing how her mother treats Vetsburg, her oldest boarder, and for what he pays for that second floor front and no lunches she can afford to cater a little; but that such a girl shouldn't be made to take up a little stenography or help with the house-work."
"Say, when that girl even turns a hand, pale like a ghost her mother gets."
"How girls are raised nowadays, even the 'floor ones!"
"I ain't the one to complain, Mrs."

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Katz, but just look down there, that red stuff."
"Where?"
"Ain't it cranberry between Ruby and Vetsburg?"
"Yes, yes, and look such a dish of it!"

"Is it right extras should be allowed to be brought on a table like this, where fourteen other boarders got to let their mouth water and look at it?"
"For myself I don't mind, but my Irving! How that child loves me, and he should got to sit at the same table with-out cranberries."
From the head of the table the flash-impliments of carving held in a glance for a stroke, her lips lifted to a smile and a simulation of interest for display of further carnivorous appetites, Mrs. Kaufman passed her nod from one to the other.

"Miss Arndt, little more? No? Mr. Krakower? Grassy? Mrs. Suss? Mr. Suss? So! Simon? Mr. Schloess? Miss Horowitz? Mr. Vetsburg, let me give you this little tender—No? Then, Ruby, here, let Mama give you just a little more—"
"No, no, Mama, please!" She caught at the hovering wrist to spare the descent of the knife.
By one of those rare staveisms by which a poet can be bred of a peasant or peasant beget of poet, Miss Ruby Kaufman, who was born in Newark, posthumously, to a terrified parent with a black ribbon at the throat of her gown, had brought with here from no telling where the sultry eyes and tropical-turned skin of spice-kissed winds. The copulosity of a shag might have been running in the blood of her, yet Simon Kaufman, and Simon Kaufman's father before him, had sold wool remnants to cap-factories on commission.

"Ruby, you don't eat enough to keep a bird alive. Ain't it a shame, Mr. Vetsburg, a girl should be so dainty?"
Mr. Meyer Vetsburg cast a befitting glance down upon Miss Kaufman, there so small beside him, and tinkled peevishly against her plate three times with his fork. "Eat, young lady, like your Mama wants you should, or, by golly, I'll string you up for my watch-ful—not, Mrs. Kaufman."
A smile lay under Mr. Vetsburg's gray-and-black mustache. Gray were his eyes, too, and his suit, a comfortable baggy suit, with the slouch of the wearer impressed into it, the coat hanging center back, the pocket-flaps half in, half out, and the knees sagging out of press.

(Continued Tomorrow)
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Change in Program
Emilio de Gogorza, baritone, will not sing at the third concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra this evening at the Academy of Music, owing to a sudden indisposition.
In his place will be Leo Ornstein, composer and pianist, who will play something better as succotash for us for supper.

MacDowell's concerto in D minor No. 2. As changed, the program will be: Beethoven's Pastoral symphony; Wagner's Prelude to Parsifal; MacDowell's piano concerto No. 2, and Liszt's Mephisto waltz.

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