

The Woman who dies on Thursdays

by Sho Botham

The pale muslin blended with the whiteness of her bloodless skin. She looked beautifully dead. Nothing moved. She was draped in a deathly pose on the parlour chaise longue. Immaculate make-up gave her cheekbones the sort of shape and style that would be welcome on any non-dead face.

Carrying her big basket, Mrs Mayhew walked up the garden path with young Jenny, the daughter of the local butcher. Young Jenny was 37 but she would always be young Jenny to Mrs Mayhew.

'Ring the bell, there's a dear,' said Mrs Mayhew.

Young Jenny rang and waited in anticipation for the door to open.

'Did it ring?'

'I heard it ring but I'll try again,' said young Jenny as she pressed the bell firmly for a second time.

'Oh silly me,' said Mrs Mayhew. 'It's Thursday, isn't it?'

'Yes, it is,' said Jenny, 'is that significant?'

'It is now. It is since she decided to die on Thursdays.'

'Sorry, die on Thursdays, what do you mean?'

'Just what I said. She dies on Thursdays'

'I'll come back tomorrow young Jenny. Can you come and give me a hand then?'

'Yes. I'll come.'

The sun rose early and long streaks of sunlight shone in through the windows. The woman moved the muslin as she swung her legs round into a sitting position. Her pallor was no longer deathly white. There was a slight rosiness to her cheekbones this morning and this gave her a non-dead appearance.

'Pork chops, are you sure she asked for pork chops?'

'Yes she wants pork chops, said her father.

'Okay,' said young Jenny, 'I'll take them with me. I'm meeting Mrs Mayhew at the house again this morning. Hopefully the woman will let us in today.'

The woman opened the door and her slightly rosy cheeks looked radiant in the sunlight.

Mrs Mayhew introduced her companion to the woman as young Jenny. Reaching her right hand forward Jenny realised she was still clutching the pork chops her father had given her. 'These are for you, from my father the butcher.'

The woman smiled.

'I do like a nice pork chop on a Friday after being dead all Thursday. One simply cannot eat when one is dead.'

Young Jenny looked at Mrs Mayhew nodding her head in agreement with the woman.

Thirteen weeks later, young Jenny was once again at the woman's front door. This time she had a friend with her. They were collecting for the local gala week to be held in June on the village green.

She pressed the bell on the front door but as she did the door swung open. Jenny went in calling 'hello, hello, it's young Jenny.'

There was no reply.

Jenny's friend followed her into the room straight ahead. At first they were blinded by the brightness of the sun streaming in the windows but then they saw her, draped on

her chaise longue, her deathly white skin glowing in the sunshine, white muslin falling in theatrical folds to the floor.

'It's Thursday,' said Jenny, 'she dies on Thursdays and then has pork chops on Fridays. We'll have to come back another day when she's not dead.'

Jenny's friend looked at her, 'okay, we can do that. Who shall we visit next?'