

Wednesdays and Fridays

Elizabeth Jolley

(from *Woman in the Lampshade*, 1983)

Wednesday 4 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

You will be surprised to have a letter from me since we are living in the same house but I should like to remind you that you have not paid me board for last week.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 11 June

Dear Mr Morgan.

This is to remind you that you are now owing two weeks' board and I should like to take the opportunity to ask you to remove the outboard motor from your room. There is an oil stain on the rug already and I'm afraid for my curtains and bedspread.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 13 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

I know there isn't anything in the 'Rules of the House' to say outboard motors cannot be kept in bedrooms. I didn't think any one would want to. Since you mention the rules I would like to draw your attention first to rule number nine which refers to empty beer cans, female visitors and cigarette ends, and to point out that rule eleven states quite clearly the hour for breakfast. It is simply not possible, I am sorry, to serve breakfasts after twelve noon.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel D. Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 18 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

I am writing to remind you that you now owe three weeks'

board and the price of one single bed sheet which is ruined. Please note that bed linen is not to be used for other purposes. Thank you for moving the outboard motor.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 20 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

No. Black oil and grease will not wash out of a sheet furthermore it's torn badly in places. I can't think how it's possible to damage a sheet as much as this one has been damaged.

I am afraid I shall have to ask you to move the outboard motor again as it is impossible for anyone to sit in the lounge room to watch TV the way you have the propellor balanced between the two easy chairs.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel D. Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 25 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

Thank you for the two dollars. I should like to remind you that you now owe four weeks' board less two dollars.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel D. Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 27 June

Dear Mr Morgan,

Leaving a note on the mantelpiece does not excuse anyone for taking two dollars which does not belong to them even if you are only borrowing it back as you say until next week. Board is at four weeks now. I'm sorry to have to tell you that the hall is too narrow for the storage of an outboard motor. And, would you please replace your bedspread and put up your curtains again as I am afraid they will spoil and they do not in any way help to prevent people from falling over the outboard as they go in and out of this house.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel D. Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 2 July

Dear Mr Morgan,

Board is up to five weeks. With respect, Mr Morgan, I'd like to suggest you try to get a job. I'd like to suggest the way to do this is to get up early and get the paper and read the *Situations Vacant, Men and Boys*, and go after something. I'd like to say this has to be done early and quick. Mr Morgan, five weeks' board is five weeks' board. And Mr Morgan what 's been going on in the bathroom. I think I am entitled to an explanation.

Yours sincerely
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 4 July

Dear Mr Morgan,

Thank you for your very kind thought. The chocolates really look very nice though, as you know, I don' t eat sweet things as I have to watch my weight but as I said it's the thought that counts. Do you think it's possible you might be smoking a bit too much. Perhaps you could cut it down to say sixty a day for a start.

Yours sincerely
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 9 July

Dear Mr Morgan

I'm still waiting for an explanation about the bathroom. I must remind you that you now owe me six weeks' board and the cost of one single bed sheet ruined plus the cost of one bottle carpet cleaning detergent plus the price of the four pounds of gift-wrapped confectionery charged to my account at the Highway General Store. Early payment would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely.
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 11 July

Mr Morgan

Get a Job. And clean your room. I never saw such a mess of chocolate papers under anyone's bed, ever. In my whole life I never saw such a mess. Never. I must point out too that I do not intend to spend hours in the kitchen over the hot roast and two veg. for someone who is too full up with rubbish to eat what's good for them.

I'd like to remind you how to get a job. You get up early to get a job. I see in the paper concrete hands are wanted, this should suit you, so GET UP EARLY as it's a question of being first on site.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

And Mr Morgan, Bathroom? Explanation? And Mr Morgan.
Smoking!

Wednesday 16 July

Dear Mr Morgan,

I appreciate you have troubles. We all have our troubles and I do see you have yours and it was kind of you to think of sending me flowers when you have so much on your mind. Thank you for the thought.

Miss, I forget, if you said, what you said her name was, had no business to miss her last bus. In future no guests are to stay in this house without me. See that this does not happen again. You seem to have forgotten the outboard motor . There simply is not room for it in the hall and it's all wet. Please see that it is removed immediately. And please Mr Morgan, Board seven weeks.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel D. Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 18 July

Dear Mr Morgan ,

First I must ask for an immediate explanation about the bathroom please. And secondly, I must ask you to ask Miss whatever her name is to leave. I suggest you ask her what her name is if you didn't get it the first time.

I hope you won't feel offended about this but there really is not room for you to sleep in the hall, you know it has always been too narrow. There simply is not room there for you and the outboard motor. One of you will have to go. And see that young Miss, leaves at once. And, Donald, always make sure you know what a girl's name is beforehand. You not knowing her name makes me feel I haven't brought you up right.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Wednesday 23 July

Dear Mr Morgan,

I have to remind you Board eight weeks and Board one week for Extra Person. Perhaps you could persuade Pearl to go back to her lovely boarding school? Could you? I'm sure she's a nice girl but I really can't do with the two of you lazing round the house all day using up all my electricity and hot water. And I don't need to tell you that there really isn't enough space in the hall for your bed, her bicycle and her extra cases and the outboard motor.

Donald it's silly blocking up the hall with your bed. The neighbors will talk in any case. They'll think immorality is going on and what about young Mary? What ideas is she going to get? Donald I'm warning you I'm putting my foot down furthermore the outboard motor is not to be used in the bath. Where can it get you? AND what about a Job?

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 25 July

Donald, No more roses please. I haven't got vases. Besides how am I going to pay for them? You know me, I'd just as soon see a flower growing in someone's garden. Thank you all the same for your lovely thought.

Your loving landlady,
Mabel Doris Morgan

Wednesday 30 July

Mr Morgan, This is to remind you Board nine weeks and Board two weeks for one Extra Person. I must say young Pearl has a healthy appetite. I wish you would eat properly.

As I was saying. Board as above, also cost of one single bed sheet, one bottle carpet cleaning detergent plus the price of the four-pound box of assorted confectionery and four dozen red roses, two deliveries, long stalks extra, and to dry cleaning and dyeing one chenille bedspread (purple; and two pairs curtains (electric green). With dry cleaning the price it is it would have been better to consult me first and about the extraordinary choice of colours, especially as I don't think the oil and grease stains will be hidden at all.

Donald, I do seriously think a Job is a good thing. Get a Job. Do try to get a Job.

Yours sincerely,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)

Friday 1 August

Donald, No more presents please. You know I never use lipsticks and certainly never a phosphorescent one. You must be off your brain. Though I suppose there is always a first time.

Your loving landlady,
Mabel Doris Morgan

Wednesday 6 August

Dear Donald.

I'm pushing this note under your door since you won't come out. I'm leaving a tray on the table outside. Do try and eat something. I'm sorry I said what I said. I am sorry too about the outboard motor. I suppose it wasn't fixed on to the boat properly. You say it's about thirty-five feet down? I didn't know the river was so deep there. Of course I'll lend you twenty dollars to hire a boat and a grappling iron. We'll simply add it onto the Board which is at ten weeks now and three weeks for one Extra Person, plus the cost of one single bed sheet, one bottle carpet cleaning detergent, one four-pound box assorted confectionery gift wrapped, and four dozen red roses, two deliveries (long stalks extra) and to the dry cleaning of one chenille bedspread and two pairs of curtains and the dyeing of the above, purple and electric green, respectively, plus the cost of one Midnight Ecstasy lipstick (phosphorescent frosted ice). I do hope we can find the outboard motor. I'm really looking forward to going on the river in a row boat, it's years since I was in a boat. We'll take Pearl and Mary with us and our lunch.

Your loving mother,
Mabel Doris Morgan
(landlady)