

~~has to get back to his school. (To the others.) Arthur is a headmaster. (Arthur beams.) He has generously cancelled his appointments for Monday, so we'll leave that afternoon. Then Arthur can be back for classes on Tuesday.~~

~~THEODORA. (Unhappily.) But today is only Saturday.~~

~~DR. MONTAGUE. (Energetically.) Isn't that fortunate? That gives us better than two full days together. Now, shouldn't we think about lunch?~~

ARTHUR. I hope the food is plain. I'm a meat and potatoes man, myself. Don't drink, don't smoke, don't read trash. Bad example for the boys at school. They look up to one a bit, you know.

THEODORA. (Innocently.) I'm sure they must all model themselves on you.

ARTHUR. (Seriously.) Get a bad sort now and then. No taste for sports, you know. Moping in corners. Crybabies. We knock that out of them fast enough.

LUKE. (Leading him on.) Toughen 'em up.

ARTHUR. Exactly.

MRS. MONTAGUE. Come Arthur, there'll be time for chit chat later. We'd better begin our preparations if we expect to be ready for tonight's work. (She steps u. c.)

DR. MONTAGUE. And just what do you have in mind for tonight?

MRS. MONTAGUE. (Impatiently.) I realize that you would never dream of going about these things with any system, but you'll have to admit, John, that in this area I have simply more of an instinctive understanding. Women do, you know. (Glancing at Eleanor and Theodora.) At least some women.

DR. MONTAGUE. My dear . . .

MRS. MONTAGUE. Therefore I have set up a definite plan of action. Tonight Arthur will patrol. I brought him along for that purpose. I will recline in your haunted room with only a night light burning, and will endeavor to get in touch with the elements disturbing this house. I never sleep when there are troubled spirits about.

ARTHUR. Got to go about these things in the right way. Never pays to aim low. Tell my fellows that.

MRS. MONTAGUE. And I think perhaps that after lunch we will have a little session with planchette. Just Arthur and myself, of

course. The rest of you, I can see, are not ready yet; you would drive away the spirits. We will need a quiet room.

LUKE. (Politely.) The library, perhaps? It's one of the gloomier rooms. Might be teeming with spirits.

MRS. MONTAGUE. It should do. Books are frequently very good carriers, you know. I hope the room has been well dusted? Arthur sometimes sneezes.

DR. MONTAGUE. Mrs. Dudley keeps the entire house in perfect order.

MRS. MONTAGUE. The library it is then. And after the session I shall require a glass of milk and perhaps a small cake. Crackers will do if they are not too heavily salted.

DR. MONTAGUE. (Wearily.) As you wish, my dear. Now I'll show you to your rooms.

MRS. MONTAGUE. (At the doorway, u. c.) No need, thank you. Come Arthur. We have much to do. (She and Arthur exit.

Dr. Montague holds the door for them.)

~~THEODORA. (Confidentially, to Eleanor.) I think I'm going to be simply crazy about Mrs. Montague.~~

~~ELEANOR. I don't know, Arthur is rather more to my taste. (Dr. Montague steps d. Luke turns to him.)~~

~~LUKE. Please, sir, who is planchette?~~

~~DR. MONTAGUE. (Muttering irritably.) The imbeciles. I hope they don't upset everything with their silly tampering. (He responds to Luke's question.) Planchette? It's a device similar to the Ouija board. A kind of spirit writing. My wife believes it to be a way to communicate with—ah—intangible beings—although to my way of thinking the only intangible beings who ever get in touch through those things are in the imaginations of the people running them. Spirit writing indeed! Balderdash!~~

~~THEODORA. Superstition!~~

~~ELEANOR. (Perking up.) What would the fellows at school think?~~

~~THEODORA. (Looking at Eleanor. Brightly.) Nell, dear. You suddenly look so much better.~~

~~LUKE. Positively radiant.~~

~~ELEANOR. (Rising.) And I'm starved. It must be almost time for lunch.~~

~~DR. MONTAGUE. Ah! The powers of Hill House are at work again. The storm cloud has passed. Shall we adjourn to the dining room?~~

Start

End