

# Audition Sides

## p. 6-7 Elenor / Mrs. Dudley

**ELEANOR.** I gather I'm the first one here. (Mrs. Dudley nods.) Will there be many others? The doctor didn't say in his letter. (Mrs. Dudley sbrugs.) You did say you were Mrs. Dudley?

**MRS. DUDLEY.** I didn't say. But I am. (Impatient.) Do you want to go to your room or wait here? You'll be in the Blue room.

**ELEANOR.** (Slightly put off by Mrs. Dudley's coldness.) How nice. (Mrs. Dudley glowers.) I mean . . . how nice to have blue. It's always been my favorite color. (She manages a tentative smile.)

**MRS. DUDLEY.** Well?

**ELEANOR.** I think I'll wait here, if you don't mind.

**MRS. DUDLEY.** Suit yourself. Blue room's the first one on the right-top of the stairs,

**ELEANOR.** F'll find it. Thank you. (She turns away.)

**MRS. DUDLEY.** (Still in the doorway.) I set dinner on the dining room sideboard at six sharp. You can serve yourselves. I clear up in the morning. I have breakfast ready for you at nine. That's the way I agreed to do. I can't keep the rooms up the way you'd like, but there's no one else you could get that would help me. I don't wait on people. What I agreed to, it doesn't mean I wait on people.

**ELEANOR.** Of course.

**MRS. DUDLEY.** I don't stay after I set out dinner. Not after it begins to get dark. (Ominously.) I leave before dark comes.

**ELEANOR.** I know. Dr. Montague mentioned in his letter . . .

**MRS. DUDLEY.** (Breaking in.) We live over in the town, six miles away.

**ELEANOR.** Yes.

**MRS. DUDLEY.** (Going on.) So there won't be anyone around if you need help.

**ELEANOR.** I understand.

**MRS. DUDLEY.** We couldn't even hear you, in the night.

**ELEANOR.** I don't suppose

**MRS. DUDLEY.** No one could. No one lives any nearer than the town. No one else will come any nearer than that.

**ELEANOR.** (Resigned.) I know.

**MRS. DUDLEY.** (A little smile on her lips.) In the night..

In the dark. (They look at each other in silence for a moment. Then Eleanor, turns away, somewhat unsettled by Mrs. Dudley's recital. From off l. comes the ring of the doorbell.). Someone else is here. I'll go now.

p. 15 Montague / Luke / Elenor / Theo

**ELEANOR.** Everything's so strange. I mean, this morning I was wondering what Hill House would be like, and now I can't believe that it's all quite real, and we're here.

**LUKE.** (Offering more sherry to Eleanor.) Since we are all here, shouldn't we get better acquainted? We only know names so far. For example, I know that it is Eleanor, here, who is wearing the red sweater, so, consequently it must be you, Theodora who wears yellow.

**THEODORA.** (Going along with him.) Doctor Montague has a beard—so you must be Luke:

**ELEANOR.** (To Theodora:) And you are Theodora, because I am Eleanor.

**LUKE.** I have no beard, so he (Pointing to Dr. Montague.) must be Dr. Montague.

**DR. MONTAGUE...**(Amused.) Exactly. And I have a beard because my wife likes them. (They laugh. Dr. Montague holds his glass out to Luke.)

**LUKE.** (Filling Dr. Montague's glass.) Well, then, now that I know which of us is me let me identify myself further. I am, in private life, let me see. . . a bullfighter.

**ELEANOR.** (Lightly.) And I am an artist's model. I live a mad, abandoned life, draped in a shawl and going from garret to garret.

**LUKE.** Are you heartless and wanton?

**THEODORA.** Are you losing your beauty, and coughing a good

**ELEANOR.** (Reflectively.) I rather think I have a heart of gold. At any rate my affairs are the talk of the cafes.

**THEODORA.** (Loftily.) And I am the daughter of the lord of the manor. Ordinarily I go clad in silk and lace, but I've borrowed my maid's finery to appear among you. I may of course become so enamored of the common life that I will never go back—and the poor girl will have to get herself new clothes. And you, Dr. Montague?

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Smiling.) A pilgrim. A wanderer.

**LUKE.** Truly a congenial little group. Hill House has surely never seen our like.

p. 18 Dr. Montague / Theo / Luke

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Shaking his bead.) You are a mutinous group of assistants. (He sits down again.) All right, I'll be as brief as I can. (He muses for a moment. The others watch him in silence.) To be frank, I didn't know just how best to prepare the three of you for Hill House. I couldn't put it all in a letter, and even now I'm reluctant to influence your minds with its complete history before you've had a chance to see all of the house for yourselves. To talk about it this way could be... misleading.

**THEODORA.** Don't give it a thought, Doctor. I'm sure we're all in the mood for a ghost story.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Frowning.) That's hardly what I have in mind. We're not children trying to frighten one another.

**THEODORA.** (Smiling.) Sorry. Just trying to get myself used to

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Seriously.) We must exercise great caution in our language. Preconceived notions of ghosts and apparitions.

**LUKE.** (Breaking in.) The disembodied hand in the soup. (The girls laugh.)

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Turning to Luke.) My dear boy. If you please. What I want to say is that our purpose here is scientific and exploratory. We cannot let it be affected, or even warped, by spooky stories which would be better told around a campfire. We're here to test certain theories regarding psychic phenomena. As a matter of fact, it would be better if you knew nothing about Hill House. Ideally you should be ignorant and receptive.

**THEODORA.** (In a low voice.) And take notes.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Agreeably.) And take notes, yes. However, since you press me; let me put it this way. There is a concept that certain houses are unclean or forbidden—just as others, like churches, for example, have atmospheres of holiness and goodness. Perhaps you could say that some houses are born bad.

p. 25 Elenor / Theo

**THEODORA.** (After a moment, with understanding.) You do look pale. You should be in bed. I'll go to my room. (Sbe turns.)

**ELEANOR.** (Suddenly.) Don't go, not yet. Couldn't we talk awhile? I think I'm too restless to sleep right away.

**THEODORA.** (Smiling.) Of course. (Sbe crosses back to the foot of the bed and sits.) Matter of fact I think we'll al have lots of chance for rest while we're here. Just between us, I think it's going to be pretty dull.

**ELEANOR.** (Pulling her knees under her chin.) We'll find plenty to do in the morning. **THEODORA.** At home there would be people around, and lots of talk and laughter. Lights and excitement—that's for me.

**ELEANOR.** (Seriously,) I suppose I don't need such things. There never was much excitement while I was taking care of Mother. When she was asleep I'd play solitaire or listen to the radio. I couldn't read in the evenings, not after reading aloud to her every afternoon. Her illness went on for so many years.

**THEODORA.** (Sympathetically.) You make me feel foolish now. Shallow and selfish.

**ELEANOR.** Why should you?

**THEODORA.** Because I worry about there being nothing to amuse me. Tell me how horrible I am.

**ELEANOR.** (Obediently.) You're horrible.

**THEODORA.** But you are sweet and pleasant, and everyone likes you very much. Luke has fallen in love with you-and I'm jealous.

**ELEANOR.** (Amused.) What nonsense.

**THEODORA.** Not at all. Now I want to know more about you. Did you really have to take care of your mother for a long time?

**ELEANOR.** Eleven years, until she died three months ago.

**THEODORA.** Were you sorry when she died? Should I say how sorry I am?

**ELEANOR.** (Quietly.) No. She wasn't very happy.

**THEODORA.** And neither were you.

**ELEANOR.** (Nodding.) And neither was I.

p. 45 Mrs. Monague / Mr. Montague / Luke / Theo

**LUKE.** (Annoyed.) Yes? What is it, Mrs. Dudley?

**MRS. DUDLEY.** Mrs. Montague is here. Should she come in?

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Not registering at first.) What? Mrs. Montague? Of course, of course. I'a completely forgotten. (He crosses u. C. as Mrs. Dudley stands aside and motions for Mrs. Montague to enter. Dr. Montague meets her at the door. Mrs. Dudley exits.) My dear, my dear. How nice that you got here. We were worried about you. (He kisses Mrs. Montague on the cheek. She is a large, formidable woman, quite dominant and overpowering. It is quickly evident that, in the Montague household, she is in charge.)

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** (Entering.) I said I'd be here this morning, didn't I? Did you ever know me not to come when I said I would? I brought Arthur.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Without enthusiasm.) Oh yes, Arthur.

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** Well, somebody had to drive. I hope you didn't expect me to come all the way out here by myself. You know perfectly well how tired I get. (She looks past her husband to the others, who are now grouped by the sofa.) How do you do.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Turning to the others.) My dear, these are my friends who have been staying in Hill House with me these past few days. Theodora, Eleanor Vance, Luke Sanderson. My wife, Mrs. Montague. (They murmur civilly. Mrs. Montague nods. Then she steps to the door and calls out.)

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** Put the bags down in the hall, Arthur. (Turning back to Dr. Montague.) We'll need someone to help with the luggage.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** (Politely.) Of course, my dear.

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** And I trust you planned on us for lunch.

**DR. MONTAGUE.** Oh yes. I alerted Mrs. Dudley.

**THEODORA.** (Imitating Mrs. Dudley.) I set lunch at one o'clock. That's what I agreed to do. (Eleanor, while still shaken, manages a slight smile.)

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** (Stepping D.) What's that? (Theodora laughs.) Oh, I see. You're mimicking that ghastly woman who let us in. Let's see . . . you're . . .

**THEODORA.** Theodora.

**MRS. MONTAGUE.** Yes. Well, no matter. I'm sure I'll get to know all your names very soon.