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DR. MONTAGUE – Luke, my boy, I have observed that you are already something of a favorite with Mrs. Dudley.

LUKE – And how did you ever manage to observe anything so unlikely? Mrs. Dudley regards me with the same particular loathing she gives a cup and saucer not in their proper places at the proper time.

DR. MONTAGUE – Well you are, after all, the heir to Hill House. Mrs. Dudley must feel for you as an old family retainer feels for the young master.

LUKE – You are a romantic sort, Doctor. But I assure you that in Mrs. Dudley's estimation I am lower than a dropped fork. If you are really serious about asking the old fool for something, send Theo, or our charming Nell. They aren't afraid.

THEODORA – No you don't. You can't send a helpless female to face down Mrs. Dudley. Nell and I are here to be protected...not to man the battlements for you cowards.

LUKE – Well then, you Doctor...

DR. MONTAGUE – Oh come now. You wouldn't really think of asking me, an older man. Anyway, you know she adores you.

LUKE – Dear, dear. You're willing to sacrifice me for a cup of coffee. Well, do not be surprised – and I say it darkly – do not be surprised if you lose your Luke in this cause. Perhaps Mrs. Dudley hasn't yet had her own mid-morning snack, and she is perfectly capable of a filet de Luke a la meuniere.

If I do not return, I entreat you...regard your lunch with the gravest suspicion. **(Exits)**

THEODORA – Lovely Luke.