

Dr. Montague Page 18-19

DR. MONTAGUE – All right, I'll be as brief as I can. 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 – That's hardly what I have in mind. We're not children trying to frighten one another. We must exercise great caution in our language. Preconceived notions of ghosts and apparitions...

LUKE – The disembodied hand in the soup.

DR. MONTAGUE – 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 – And take notes.

DR. MONTAGUE – 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. Hill House, whatever the cause, has been unfit for human habitation for some twenty years. What it was like before then, whether its personality was molded by the people who lived here, or the things they did, or whether it was evil from its start, I do not know. I hope, however, that some of these questions will be answered before we leave. But no one knows why some houses are called haunted.

LUKE – What else could you call Hill House?

DR. MONTAGUE – Disturbed, perhaps. Or sick. Or leprous. Although haunted will do.