

CHARLES. I was not in the least drunk, Ruth. Something happened to me last night; something very peculiar happened to me.

RUTH. Nonsense.

CHARLES. It isn't nonsense. I know it looks like nonsense now in the clear remorseless light of day, but last night it was far from being nonsense. I honestly had some sort of hallucination.

RUTH. I would really rather not discuss it any further.

CHARLES. But you must discuss it. It's very disturbing.

RUTH. There I agree with you. It showed you up in a most unpleasant light. I find that extremely disturbing.

CHARLES. I swear to you that during the séance I was convinced that I heard Elvira's voice.

RUTH. Nobody else did.

CHARLES. I can't help that. I did.

RUTH. You couldn't have.

CHARLES. And later on I was equally convinced that she was in this room. I saw her distinctly and talked to her. After you'd gone up to bed we had quite a cosy little chat.

RUTH. And you seriously expect me to believe that you weren't drunk?

CHARLES. I *know* I wasn't drunk. If I'd been all that drunk I should have a dreadful hangover now, shouldn't I?

RUTH. I'm not at all sure that you haven't.

CHARLES. I haven't got a trace of a headache – my tongue's not coated – look at it.

(He puts out his tongue.)

RUTH. I've not the least desire to look at your tongue, kindly put it in again.

CHARLES. *(Rising, crossing to the mantelpiece and lighting a cigarette.)* I know what it is. You're frightened.

RUTH. Frightened! Rubbish. What is there to be frightened of?



CHARLES. Elvira. You wouldn't have minded all that much, even if I had been drunk; it's only because it was all mixed up with Elvira.

RUTH. I seem to remember last night before dinner telling you that your views of female psychology were rather didactic. I was right. I should have added that they were puerile.

CHARLES. That was when it all began.

RUTH. When what all began?

CHARLES. (*Moving up to above the right end of the sofa.*) We were talking too much about Elvira. It's dangerous to have somebody very strongly in your mind when you start dabbling with the occult.

RUTH. She certainly wasn't strongly in my mind.

CHARLES. She was in mine.

RUTH. Oh, she was, was she?

CHARLES. (*Crossing and facing RUTH at the breakfast table.*) You tried to make me say that she was more physically attractive than you, so that you could hold it over me.

RUTH. I did not. I don't give a hoot how physically attractive she was.

CHARLES. Oh yes, you do. Your whole being is devoured with jealousy.

(*He moves to the armchair.*)

RUTH. (*Rising.*) This is too much!

CHARLES. (*Sitting in the armchair.*) Women! My God, what I think of women!

RUTH. Your view of women is academic to say the least of it. Just because you've always been dominated by them, it doesn't necessarily follow that you know anything about them.

CHARLES. I've never been dominated by anyone.

RUTH. (*Crossing to below the right breakfast chair.*) You were hag-ridden by your mother until you were twenty-three, then you got into the clutches of that awful Mrs. Whatever her name was.

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