

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE – Content Warning

This sheet is for anyone who would like to have a greater understanding of any sensitive content prior to seeing the show, therefore **please be aware that if you read on, there will be significant spoilers.**

PLOT SUMMARY

When a group of daring investigators take on the mystery of Hill House, curiosity quickly descends into fear. Experiments plunge into darkness. Strange disturbances ripple through twisting corridors... as the house tightens its grip, it will leave you on the edge of your seat... and questioning what is real long after the curtain falls.

CONTENT WARNINGS – these themes occur throughout:

- Supernatural events
- Extreme loud noises
- Smoking
- Parental death
- Death of a child
- Implications of stalking/being watched
- Jump scares
- Intense emotional distress
- Blood/the illusion of blood
- Strobe lighting effect
- Reference to suicidal ideation
- Accident leading to death/suicide

SCENE BY SCENE BREAKDOWN

Scene 1: We meet Eleanor on the steps of Hill House. She tries to open the door to the building but fails, and so leans against it until Mrs Dudley appears. Eleanor introduces herself as one of Dr Montague's guests, to little reaction from the housekeeper. Eleanor apologises for being early, to which Mrs Dudley replies that she is not early at all, that in fact the beds have been made up and waiting for years, waiting for the first moment that guests might return to the building. Eleanor asks if she can go inside and, almost reluctantly, Mrs Dudley unlocks the door to allow them both to enter.

They enter a space that feels almost forgotten about, with a dust sheet hanging over a large painting in the hallway. Mrs Dudley starts to set out the timings for the guests' meals, and implies that a lot

of the amenities that they might expect to work within the house, such as the mainline phone, won't work. Walking through endless corridors, they reach Eleanor's room.

Scene 2: Opening the door to the Blue Room, Mrs Dudley tells Eleanor that she is the room's first guest, and we hear a bit about Mrs Dudley's personal history with the house. It becomes clear that the room Eleanor is staying in was initially meant to be a nursery. Eleanor asks why, but Mrs Dudley leaves before she can give Eleanor an answer. Eleanor explores the room and its accessories a little, before starting to unpack, placing her vanity case on the bed. As she goes to close the lid of the music box she'd looked at earlier, her vanity case is thrown off the bed, with its contents spilling everywhere. Eleanor jumps, but then admonishes herself, believing that the case fell due to her own clumsiness. Continuing to unpack, the door to Eleanor's room opens, and we meet another of the guests, Theodora – making Eleanor jump again. They shake hands, and Theodora expresses her intrigue at Eleanor being given the nursery, before Mrs Dudley appears to tell Theodora that her room is the Green Room next door. Theodora comments on the small size of Eleanor's suitcase compared to her own, and the pair discuss the ghost-hunting that they have been invited there to take part in.

Theodora asks Eleanor if she has ever met Dr Montague, and is glad to hear that he seems credible after learning that Eleanor did checks on him before attending. We learn that Theodora has left only a housemate behind as she asks Eleanor what her favourite trinket is. Eleanor says she doesn't have it yet, but that it would be "a cup of stars", which Theodora says she'll keep an eye out for as she has a little shop where she sells jewellery and other things. Eleanor, bashfully, says that she thinks Theodora is bringing more light into the room than the window is, and she speculates about whether anyone could truly live at the house whilst Theodora starts to plan a picnic out loud. Eleanor starts to talk about her mother, and how she wasn't allowed to climb apple trees when she was younger as her mother said that it wasn't a ladylike thing to do. In remembering this, Eleanor sings a song, realising that it is the first time she has spoken about her mother aloud since she passed only a few months prior.

Theodora, lightening the mood, says how wonderful it is to make new friends, and the pair move closer together before hearing a man's voice in the distance draws them apart. Theodora goes to investigate, but Eleanor can't shake the feeling that someone is watching her. As she spins around to check, the rocking chair in the room starts to rock unbidden, stopping as quickly as it starts. She leaves the room, but after she does, the music box starts to play the song that Eleanor had been singing.

Scene 3: Eleanor enters the Grand Hall, watching Theodora apply lipstick. Realising she is there, Theodora puts the make up away as Luke enters – clearly another guest for the weekend. We learn that Luke's Aunt owns the house, and that one day the house and estate will go to him. Luke and Theodora interact, flirting a little, until Eleanor interrupts to ask where Dr Montague is. Appearing as if by magic, Dr Montague appears at the sound of his name, saying that it is well to use the word "Haunted" to describe the house, setting the tone for his belief that something walks alone and undisturbed through the house. He asks the others if they are ready to discover what that thing might be, but suggests a drink first so that they can all acclimatise.

Scene 4: Moving into the Drawing Room, Theodora offers to make the cocktails, as the suggestion of toasting to the success of the mission comes forward. Dr Montague says that he would define success for this endeavour to be him being able to document the apparitions that he believes are in

the house, saying that all he would like to do is ask his guests to help him make notes about their time at the house. We learn that it took a lot of persuading by Dr Montague to be given permission to stay at the house, and that Mrs Dudley's presence is only there because he is paying her double her usual salary. Luke owns up to the fact that his Aunt has asked him to stay there too whilst the experiments are done to ensure nothing gets damaged, and Theodora admits that she has some kind of supernatural ability as she was able to identify a set of cards without ever seeing them before. As for Eleanor, we discover that she has previously had interactions with a poltergeist.

Dr Montague tells the guests a little about the family history of the house, and how the man who had it build – Hugh Crain – lost his family in a carriage crash on the day they were all due to move in. The Doctor suggests that Mr Crain spent the rest of his life trying to contact his late wife and child through séances, and Eleanor pitches in with saying that three people have died at Hill House. Clarifying that it is simply the presence of spirits that they are dealing with at the House – and not poltergeists – Dr Montague attempts to appease the guests, but not before a loud bang is heard of a door being slammed. Insisting that it is just the draft, he attempts to set up his recording equipment, which plays a little of what we have just heard Eleanor say. Believing that he must have hit the record button by accident, the group agree to call it a night after their day of journeying.

Scene 5: Standing by Eleanor's bedroom door, Theodora and Eleanor talk, with Theodora saying how excited she is to get to know someone new. Kissing her on the cheek, she leaves Eleanor to her evening – with Eleanor being shocked and delighted at receiving such an intimate gesture. Still slightly on edge following the discussions of the paranormal, though, she leaves her bedroom door ajar as she readies for bed. Getting into bed and turning off the bedside light, the door closes itself, and the rocking chair begins to rock on its own. We hear the sound of footsteps, and the bedsheets manoeuvres itself as though tucking Eleanor in again. The chair rocks faster and faster before stopping suddenly at an unnatural angle. Theodora bursts in, the chair is immobile, and the light rises as everything is back to normal the following day.

Theodora is amazed that Eleanor has only just woken, stating that it is breakfast time. Eleanor asks Theodora if she had been in during the night as she had felt the presence of someone in the room, and whilst Theodora says that she has only recently come in, she's not surprised by Eleanor's apparently vivid dreams after the conversations of the previous evening. Eleanor moves to the bathroom to get dressed, and Theodora teases her that if she starves of hunger because they're late to breakfast, she's going to come back as a ghost in a white sheet to haunt Eleanor. Eleanor steps out, dressed, and Theodora takes her hand as they go downstairs.

Scene 6: Over breakfast, the group discuss that it was a fairly quiet night all things considered, but still debate wanting to tell ghost stories. Dr Montague warns against losing the professional angle of the work he is hoping to undertake, but all are silenced by the sound of slowly approaching footsteps. The door opens – and Mrs Dudley walks in, much to everyone’s relief. Theodora says that it must be odd to be housekeeper for a house that so rarely has guests, to which Mrs Dudley replies that the

floors still need sweeping, even if no-one walks on them. We learn that she has been connected to Hill House since she was a young girl, as her father was employed by Mr Crain. She says that she has kept the door to the tower locked ever since Mr Crain died there, and yet maintains that she has never seen anything ghost-like or untoward at the house. Eleanor notes still, though, that Mrs Dudley still leaves the house before it gets dark, to avoid anything, to which Mrs Dudley doesn’t reply. Dr Montague, done with speculation, suggests that they start their work in the heart of the house.

Scene 7: Back in the hallway, Eleanor is drawn to the tapestry that hangs there, and as she looks more closely she realises that it is filled with strange scenes, almost from the occult. Dr Montague pushes the tapestry aside, revealing the locked doorway to the tower. Luke reiterates that that is the one place his Aunt doesn’t want anyone to venture to, and the Doctor says that he wants to start in the hallway anyway. However, Eleanor starts to hear a tapping noise, and instinctively moves towards the curtain and the tower door. Almost instantly, Luke tells her not to, and insists that it is just her imagination when Eleanor tries to tell him that she heard something. Examining the space, Dr Montague notes how nothing is set at ninety degrees within the house, lending an unnerving quality to the space. As they discuss theories as to why, the Dr’s equipment bursts with a pop and smoke, immediately followed by Luke pulling off the cover to the painting, causing everyone to jump. This reveals a family portrait of the Crains and as Eleanor looks more closely, she sees that Mrs Crain is wearing a shawl very similar to one that her own mother had. Tinkering with his equipment, the Dr notes that the centre of the house is three degrees colder than anywhere else, suggesting that the place has a cold heart. A tape recording begins to play, and again we hear Eleanor talking to her mother before the Dr is eventually able to switch it off. He says that recordings are the key to ghost and supernatural sightings now, as they can’t be as easily dismissed as photographs.

The group hears a bang in another room, and they all turn towards the sound. Another bang comes, and Dr Montague asks Eleanor and Theodora to stay and monitor the equipment as he and Luke go to investigate. The apple tree song starts to play again, and more bangs are heard: one that sounds like someone hitting a wall, another from upstairs, and the sounds swell and start to surround the women. Theodora becomes increasingly unsettled, and Eleanor becomes increasingly convinced that these sounds are her mother trying to reach her. Theodora insists that they need to get Doctor Montague as the sounds reach a climax, before everything becomes suddenly still – apart from a knocking coming from inside the tower. Eleanor moves towards it, pulling the curtain back, as the door unlocks itself. Unsure, but unable to pull herself away, she watches as a shadow is cast along the floor and up the wall. Unable to move, she hears a woman singing the apple tree song once more,

as the lights cut in and out. Eleanor is pulled into the air, terrifyingly, as she cries out. Another female voice joins her cry, as Eleanor is violently pulled towards the tower door. She cries out “Mother” as the lights cut out.

INTERVAL

Scene 8: The group are gathered by the fire, trying to rationalise what just happened, with everyone in shock other than Eleanor. The wider group believe that they saw a fox run in, and Dr Montague’s equipment is erratic enough to not give them a full and proper reading. Luke says that he should be angry with Eleanor for trying to break into the tower when he’d said that it needed to remain closed, and Eleanor struggles to justify or explain her experience to everyone else – no-one seems to be fully believing her. Dr Montague says it is rather remarkable, and suggests that no-exploring takes place unless they are all together, something the group agree to readily. Eleanor still maintains that it was her mother that interacted with her, and the Doctor cautions her against being lead by her emotions. After a pause, Luke asks the Doctor if he thinks that it is Mr Crain’s presence that is following them through the house, and the Doctor appears to agree, saying that it is the most logical explanation given that Mr Crain was the last person to die within the walls of the house. Eleanor acknowledges that the Doctor is searching for the truth, and even admits that she is not having an unpleasant time – in fact, she feels like she is waking up to the world around her. A bang comes from the room next door, and the group becomes tense. Moving towards the Great Hall as one, they approach to see what it could be.

Scene 9: Arriving into the Hall, Eleanor, Theodora, and Dr Montague are all confused by the vision of fur and suitcase that they see before them. As the figure steps into the house, it becomes clear that it is the Doctor’s wife, Mrs Montague. She tells the group that she had to walk all the way down the driveway with her luggage as the taxi driver refused to get any closer to the building, and, introducing her to the rest of the group, Dr Montague tells her that she gave them all a fright. Eleanor can’t believe it when Mrs Montague says that the Doctor has been gone for days, and Mrs Montague says that it is a good sign of supernatural activity if it feels like time is being lost. She accuses her husband of being nervous, who quickly replies that he is not nervous, but instead is getting himself used to the house and its quirks. Luke offers to carry her things to her room, and he and Dr and Mrs Montague leave. Eleanor and Theodora tease about what the Doctor might see in her, and Theodora is pleased to see Eleanor smile for the first time since the incident. Theodora heads up the stairs to follow the group but, taking her time, Eleanor doesn’t immediately follow.

Instead, she pulls out Mrs Crain’s shawl, knowing that her mother had owned one exactly like it. A radiator rattles, and Eleanor’s attention is drawn away from the fabric as she investigates. The shawl, without her eyes on it, billows into life as if someone is wearing it, and as Eleanor turns around, it snaps onto her and envelops her, dressing her like Mrs Crain – or indeed her own mother. She is shocked and scared, and as she tries to work out what is happening, the phone starts ringing. With

no-one else there to answer, she picks up the receiver. She asks if anyone is there, but there is no reply. Suddenly, we hear Theodora scream from upstairs, and Eleanor, feeling oddly alive, runs to Theodora's voice through the house.

Scene 10: Arriving at Theodora's bedroom, Eleanor stops as she sees a note written on the wall: "Home Eleanor". The message is written in red, and although paint, it looks like blood. Luke asks Eleanor what she is wearing – she is still in Mrs Crain's shawl. Eleanor, piecing together more of the

puzzle, thinks that the message has come from her mother, and that her mother is trying to pull her home from beyond the grave. The Montagues enter, and the Doctor is in disbelief that the message wasn't written by any of the living humans present. Eleanor tries to explain what happened downstairs, but is hushed by the Doctor. Mrs Montague explains that spirits are able to move the energies around them, as the Doctor rushes to perfectly capture the event. Dr Montague speculates what else Mr Crain might want to say, dismissing Eleanor's theories that it is actually her own mother talking. Exasperated, the Doctor tries to tell Eleanor that people often think of their mothers in moments of supernatural experiences. He does however concede that the spirits of the House are trying to tell Eleanor that they want her to live there. Disarming the Doctor, Eleanor asks him what he thinks of when he thinks of his own mother in moments like this, and he says little, but confesses that she didn't think very much of him and his exploits. The Doctor also struggles to understand why Eleanor isn't excited about the suggestion that the spirits have chosen her, and so dismisses her to go and help with Theodora instead. Eleanor leaves, and as Dr Montague documents the room, his tape player starts to smoke. He smells the smoke and turns around, managing to find a way to quell the flames. Filled with a sense of joy at this seeming further proof of spirits, he takes a drink from his hipflask.

Scene 11: Eleanor returns to Theo, offering her clean clothes from her own suitcase, saying that they could dress as twins. Theo recoils at the suggesting, implying that she doesn't want to wear or do anything that might create a connection between herself and Eleanor – and whatever might be going on. She says that she was contemplating packing her back and leaving, saying that the house is making her be stuck with her own thoughts, rather than helping her to escape them. As Eleanor helps to clean Theo up, the music box springs open and again plays the apple tree song. Theo, on edge, springs up to slam it shut. The pair draw closer and share a moment, not noticing that the rocking chair has started rocking back and forth. Luke walks in to say that he has started running Theo a bath so that she can relax and clean up, and she leaves. Luke tries to encourage Eleanor to stay close to the group, and she replies saying it is hard to when she wants to run and explore every nook and cranny of the place, to feel how special it is. She remarks on how Luke doesn't appear to share in that feeling, and can't understand why he returned if he hates the house so much. Luke mentions a sense of unfinished business, and how his father's cruelty towards him at the house has left an emotional mark on him. Eleanor moves closer to him, and the pair kiss.

A noise disrupts them, and they pull away. Eleanor thinks that Luke is starting to believe that something is happening within the house, but Luke only comments that the curiosity of this life

appears to be agreeing with Eleanor. Theo calls through and tells Luke that her bath is ready, and Luke leaves, perhaps to join her. Eleanor, delighted by the kiss she and Luke have shared, hugs a teddy bear as Mrs Dudley enters with clean towels before dinner. Mrs Montague also enters, asking Mrs Dudley if she can request something for one of the dinners, which Mrs Dudley is put out by. Eleanor asks Mrs Montague if there is any way that someone could contact a specific spirit, and we learn that the Montagues lost their son during the war. Mrs Dudley and Eleanor talk, and Eleanor says that she wants to say sorry to her mother. Mrs Dudley replies that she should have never opened the

door to Eleanor, but Eleanor rebuffs this because she is glad that she did. The lights in the room flicker as Mrs Dudley leaves, and Eleanor asks the House to free her of the ache she is feeling. We see a shadow walk past her door, and the music box starts playing again. Eleanor picks up the box, hearing the Montagues' voices, and goes to the top of the staircase.

Scene 12: Eleanor eavesdrops on the Montagues talking, and hears Mrs Montague trying to calm the Doctor down – it seems that his equipment is finally working, despite the differences between his modern methods and the old ways that Mrs Montague prefers. They realise how much having the young people around them, and seeing their curiosities, is reminding them of their own son. Discussing their guests, they both share a worry around Eleanor, and how she might be affected by the whole process of ghost hunting. Mrs Dudley enters, and the Montagues imply that she must know something, or feel something, about the strange goings-on in the house. Eleanor enters, shortly followed by Luke and Theo, and all agree that it is time to use the planchette (or Ouija board) to contact the spirits directly and settle the question of whether it is Mr Crain, or Eleanor's mother, trying to get in touch. Eleanor suddenly freezes, realising that one day, probably soon, she will have to leave Hill House. Panicking, she asks Theo if she could go home with her for a little while afterwards, but Theo says no.

The group gather around the planchette, in the heart of the house. Placing their hands on it, Mrs Montague invites any spirits present to speak to the assembled. After a moment, the Doctor's equipment starts to light up, and the planchette starts to move; in shock, Eleanor and Mrs Montague take their hands off it. It continues to move by itself. Eventually all movement stops, and nothing further happens. The group, tense, start to bicker as a storm starts outside. Everyone else is distracted, but Eleanor is focused – as is the House. We start to hear the apple tree song playing as the lighting begins and the storm gets closer. Eleanor, understanding, asks the house to show her the way. Suddenly she is transported through the tower door as Luke calls her name. The others realise that the house has tricked them, and, with urgency, they realise that they need to get to Eleanor. Lightning fills the room, and Eleanor climbs the stairs towards the top of the tower, following the sound of the song. In a trance, she finds a hatch, and climbs through.

Scene 13: Eleanor enters the room in pitch darkness, and calls out for her mother as we hear Luke calling out for Eleanor. Suddenly, the lights click on and we are confronted by an occult-ish room, with weird and unnerving symbols on the walls, with a painting of Mrs Cain and her daughter Mary up

on an altar. Eleanor starts to tear the papers down from the walls, saying to Mr Crain that she understands who he had been trying to talk to before died, revealing the word 'MOTHER' scratched onto the wall. Eleanor, believing her mother is present, starts apologising to her, explaining that she was tired of living a life that was barely hers at all. Finally, as all but one light goes out, she says that she wants to be free of her mother and in a terrifying moment, we see a shadow of someone pass. Eleanor lurches forward as though she'd been pushed, and is thrown through the window, almost suspended in space for a moment before she falls.

Scene 14: The morning after, in the Grand Hall, Mrs Dudley is smoking a cigarette as Dr Montague comes downstairs in shock. The Doctor confirms that he has told the sad news to Eleanor's sister, and Mrs Dudley wonders whether this therefore counts as a failed experiment. The two muse on

that as Mrs Montague arrives, commenting that the police didn't stay for very long at the scene. Theodora

arrives to leave, and we see two sides to what has happened – those that believe Eleanor jumped, and those that believe she was pushed. Theodora, emotional, leaves.

Mrs Montague asks Mrs Dudley if she will stay with the house, and Mrs Dudley reminds her that she promised Mr Crain that she would look after the house until she was no longer able to, and that she wasn't about to break her promise. Mrs Montague, in a change of heart, asks Mrs Dudley to be careful, finally recognising that there is something malevolent about the house, after all. She leaves, and Mrs Dudley gently props up the teddy bear that had been on Eleanor's bed onto the sideboard, before also leaving.

The day shifts into night, and the tower door creaks open. We see the shadow of a child move across the room, and the shadow becomes Mary, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Crain. She grabs the teddy bear. Running in after her is Eleanor, who looks at the child, and then up to the family portrait. The pieces fall into place in her mind, and she realises who Mary is, and that it is Mary who has been tricking her all along. Mary, gleeful, runs off as she shouts that Eleanor can be her mother now. Eleanor, horrified, laments that she was meant to be free at last, not trapped forever in a house that isn't hers. Her screams fade, along with the night, and daylight returns to Hill House as the tower door closes and locks.

End.