

Madame Arcati and Ruth *Discussing the unexpected return of Charles's first wife, Elvira.*

RUTH: It's all very fine for you to talk like this, Madame Arcati. You don't seem to have the faintest realization of my position.

MADAME ARCATI: Try to look on the bright side.

RUTH: Bright side indeed! If your husband's first wife suddenly appeared from the grave and came to live in the house with you, do you suppose you'd be able to look on the bright side?

MADAME ARCATI: I resent your tone, Mrs. Condomine; I really do.

RUTH: You most decidedly have no right to. You are entirely to blame for the whole horrible situation.

MADAME ARCATI: Kindly remember that I came here on the other night on your own invitation.

RUTH: On my husband's invitation.

MADAME ARCATI: I did was requested to do, which was to give a séance and establish contact with the Other Side. I had no idea that there was any ulterior motive mixed up with it.

RUTH: Ulterior motive?

MADAME ARCATI: Your husband was obviously eager to get in touch with his former wife. If I had been aware of that at the time I should naturally have consulted you beforehand. After all, 'Noblesse oblige'!

RUTH: He had no intention of trying to get in touch with anyone. The whole thing was planned in order to get material for a mystery story he is writing about a homicidal medium.

MADAME ARCATI: *(drawing herself up)* Am I to understand that I was only invited in a spirit of mockery.

RUTH: Not at all. He merely wanted to make notes of some of the tricks of the trade.

MADAME ARCATI: *(incensed)* Tricks of the trade! Insufferable! I've never been so insulted in my life. I feel we have nothing more to say to one another, Mrs. Condomine. Goodbye! *(She turns away up stage C to the door)*

RUTH: Please don't go—please—

MADAME ARCATI: *(turning and facing Ruth upstage C by the door)* Your attitude from the outset has been most unpleasant, Mrs. Condomine. Some of your remarks have been discourteous in the extreme and I should like to say, without umbrage, that it you and your husband were foolish enough to tamper with the unseen for paltry motives and in a spirit of ribaldry, whatever has happened to you is your own fault, and, to coin a phrase, as far as I'm concerned you can stew in your own juice!

Charles and Ruth *Arguing over their ghostly visitor.*

RUTH: She came here with one purpose and one purpose only—and if you can't see it you're a bigger fool than I thought you.

CHARLES: What purpose could she have beyond a natural desire to see me again? After all, you must remember that she was extremely attached to me, poor child.

RUTH: Her purpose is perfectly obvious. It is to get you to herself forever.

CHARLES: That's absurd. How could she?

RUTH: By killing you off, of course.

CHARLES: Killing me off? You're mad.

RUTH: Why do you suppose Edith fell down the stairs and nearly cracked her skull?

CHARLES: What's Edith got to do with it?

RUTH: Because the whole of the front stair was covered in axle grease. Cook discovered it afterwards.

CHARLES: You're making this up, Ruth.

RUTH: I'm not. I swear I'm not. Why do you suppose when you were lopping that dead branch off the pear tree that the ladder broke? Because it had been practically sawn through on both sides!

CHARLES: She couldn't be so sly, so wicked! She couldn't!

RUTH: Couldn't she just?

CHARLES: I grant you that as a character she was always rather light and irresponsible, but I would never have believed her capable of low cunning.

RUTH: Perhaps the spirit world has deteriorated her.

CHARLES: Oh, Ruth!

RUTH: For heaven's sake stop looking like a wounded spaniel and concentrate. This is serious.

Ruth

Expressing her frustration over the return of Elvira.

RUTH: I've been making polite conversation all through dinner last night and breakfast and lunch today—and it's been a nightmare—and I'm not going to do it anymore. I don't like Elvira any more than she likes me, and what's more, I'm certain that I never could have, alive or dead. If, since her untimely arrival here the other evening, she had shown the slightest sign of good manners, the slightest sign of good breeding, I might have felt differently towards her, but all she has done is try to make mischief between us and have private jokes with you against me. I am now going up to my room and I shall have my dinner on a tray. You and she can have the house to yourselves and joke and gossip with each other to your heart's content. The first thing in the morning I'm going to London to interview the Psychical Research Society, and if they fail me I shall go straight to the Archbishop of Canterbury.....

Elvira

Describing why she returned from the afterlife to haunt Charles.

ELVIRA: I sat there, on the other side, just longing for you day after day. I did really. All through your affair with that brassy-looking woman in the South of France. I went on loving you and thinking truly of you. Then you married Ruth and even then I forgave you and tried to understand because all the time I believed deep inside that you really loved me best...that's why I put myself down for a return visit and had to fill in all those forms and wait about in draughty passages for hours. If only you'd died before you met Ruth, everything might have been all right. She's absolutely ruined you. I hadn't been in the house a day before I realized that. Your books aren't a quarter as good as they used to be, either.

Madame Arcati

Conducting a séance at the home of Ruth and Charles Condomine. One table bump means "yes"; two table bumps mean "no."

MADAM ARCATI: Sshhh!...Is that you, Daphne? *(The table gives a louder bump.)* Is your cold better, dear? *(The table gives two loud bumps, very quickly)* Oh, I'm so sorry. Are you doing anything for it? *(The table bumps several times)* I'm afraid she's rather fretful...*(There is silence)* Is there anyone there who would like to speak to anyone here? *(After a pause the table gives one bump)* Ah! Now we're getting somewhere...No, Daphne, don't do that, dear, you're hurting me...Daphne, dear, please...Oh, oh, oh!...be good, there's a dear child...You say there's someone there who wishes to speak to someone here? *(One bump)* Is it me? *(Two sharp bumps)* Is it Dr. Bradman? *(Two bumps)* Is it Mrs. Bradman? *(Two bumps)* Is it Mrs. Condomine? *(Several large bumps, which continue until MADAME ARCATI shouts it down)* Stop it! Behave yourself! Is it Mr. Condomine? *(There is dead silence for a moment, and then a very loud single bump)* There's someone who wishes to speak to you, Mr. Condomine.

Charles

Bidding farewell to the ghosts of his two late wives, Ruth and Elvira.

CHARLES: *(starting to speak at the door. Softly.)* Ruth!—Elvira!—are you there? *(A pause.)* Ruth!—Elvira!—I know damn well you're there. *(Another pause)* I just want to tell you that I'm going away, so there's no point in your hanging around any longer—I'm going a long way away—somewhere where I don't believe you'll be able to follow me—in spite of what Elvira said I don't think spirits can travel over water. Is that quite clear, my darlings? You said in one of your more acid moments, Ruth, that I had been hag-ridden all my life! How right you were! But now I'm free, Ruth dear, not only of Mother and Elvira and Mrs. Winthrope-Llewellyn, but free of you too, and I should like to take this farewell opportunity of saying I'm enjoying it immensely—

(The vase on the mantelpiece falls on the hearth-stone and smashes)

Aha!—I thought so—you were very silly, Elvira to imagine that I didn't know all about you and Captain Bracegirdle. I did. But what you didn't know was that I was extremely attached to Paula Westlake at the time!

(The picture above the piano crashes to the ground)

I was reasonably faithful to you, Ruth, but I doubt if it would have lasted much longer. You were becoming increasingly domineering, you know, and there's nothing more off-putting than that, is there?

(The clock strikes sixteen very quickly)

Good-bye for the moment, my dears! I expect we are bound to meet again one day, but until we do I'm going to enjoy myself as I've never enjoyed myself before.