

## 11. Marjory & Huldey

(**MARJORY** in the Portrait Gallery...which is the same room as the parlor.)

(She sits in the good chair. Feet up.)

(She is not polishing anything.)

(She writes in **HULDEY**'s diary.)

**MARJORY.** Monday: I polished.

Tuesday: I polished and I cooked.

Wednesday: I cooked more things and afterwards I scrubbed.

Thursday: It rained and Miss Emilie tracked mud everywhere and I cleaned it.

Friday: I told Huldey to murder Miss Agatha.

(*Musing.*)

I should like to be in charge. Why should everybody else have a say but me? *I'm* the one with ideas. And my diary is full of action verbs. And if people were to ask me questions, I should have a lot more to say for myself, because I've done a lot more, I've considered a lot more, and I have a lot of thoughts about the moors and manual labor and the typhus, and also child-rearing, and if Huldey does not kill Miss Agatha soon, I shall have to murder them both, although I would much prefer someone else to do it.

(**HULDEY** enters.)

(*There is a different air about her.*)

(*The air of a woman heading toward greatness.*)

**HULDEY.** There you are! I've been looking for you.

**MARJORY.** I've been here, in the Portrait Gallery.

**HULDEY.** Aren't you supposed to be...scrubbing? Something?

**MARJORY.** Every good murderess needs a confidante and a chronicler. So right now, I am confidanting and chronicling.

**HULDEY.** Is that my diary?

**MARJORY.** No, right now this is An Historical Record. Multiple voices go into making up An Historical Record.

**HULDEY.** Multiple?

**MARJORY.** First yours. And now mine.

**HULDEY.** Hm.

(*Beat – on to more exciting things!*)

I've been working on my ballad!

**MARJORY.** Your what?

**HULDEY.** The ballad about killing Agatha.

**MARJORY.** ...But you haven't killed her yet.

**HULDEY.** No, I want the ballad ready for when I do.

**MARJORY.** Don't you think you should be focusing on the murder?

**HULDEY.** I want everything ready for when it happens. I want the ballad ready, so nobody else tries to stick their own stupid ballad in its place, and I want to pick out the right outfit and I haven't done that yet.

**MARJORY.** But how are you going to kill her?

(*A beat. HULDEY has not considered this.*)

**HULDEY.** Well, I don't know. I mean. People die out here all the time.

**MARJORY.** People *die*, but people are not *murdered*.

**HULDEY.** I mean there's...exposure. Isn't there? The typhus? Complications?

**MARJORY.** Your sister is not ailing in the slightest.

**HULDEY.** Perhaps I might...uh...lure her out into the moors! "Agatha," I might say, "come outside at once!" And then she will get lost and the quicksand will suck her under and that will be that.

(*Oh dear, this could all be going terribly awry. But MARJORY rallies.*)

**MARJORY.** (*Crafty.*) You can't put that in a ballad.

**HULDEY.** No?

**MARJORY.** No! If you're going to write a good ballad, you need a good murder, which involves an axe or a pick or a dagger or at the very least poison.

**HULDEY.** You've thought about this.

**MARJORY.** You haven't!

**HULDEY.** I have!

I have all my answers ready for when people interview me and ask me lots of questions.

**MARJORY.** You have *answers*?

**HULDEY.** Interview me! Go on! Ask me, "Huldeygarð, why did you murder your elder sister in such callous and cold blood."

**MARJORY.** "Huldeygarð, why did you -"

**HULDEY.** I was a woman pushed to desperate straits, I tell you, desperate! Here on the moors one reaches such extremity of emotion! Now, of course, I see the error of my ways and I repent.

**MARJORY.** That's no good at all.

**HULDEY.** (*Crushed.*) I thought it was rather good.

**MARJORY.** You can't repent! You can't see the error of your ways!

**HULDEY.** I can't?

**MARJORY.** It's BORING.

**HULDEY.** ...Oh.

**MARJORY.** Nobody CARES about people who are SORRY. Everybody FORGETS the people who are SORRY. The only people who get remembered are the ones who are NEVER SORRY.

(**HULDEY** takes this in. Way in.)

**HULDEY.** Wow.

**MARJORY.** Just forget it. You weren't cut out for this.

**HULDEY.** No! No wait.

**MARJORY.** I have to go scrub something.

**HULDEY.** No wait! I can be. I can be cut out for this.

**MARJORY.** I don't think so. You want to be sorry and you want to be forgiven.

**HULDEY.** I can not want those things! I can be very cold and very brutal.

**MARJORY.** Can you?

**HULDEY.** Interview me again.

**MARJORY.** "Huldeygarð, why did you murder your elder sister in such callous and cold blood."

**HULDEY.** (*Coldly and with poise.*) Because that is what I am, sir. A murderess.

(*Beat. Okay. Better.*)

**MARJORY.** "And how do you feel in the aftermath?"

**HULDEY.** Nothing.

**MARJORY.** "Nothing?"

**HULDEY.** I feel nothing.

(*Beat.*)

**MARJORY.** That was okay.

**HULDEY.** Was it good?

**MARJORY.** It was better.

**HULDEY.** It was good, wasn't it.

**MARJORY.** You *are* going to do it, aren't you?

**HULDEY.** Of course.

**MARJORY.** Of course?

**HULDEY.** Of course I'm going to do it!

**MARJORY.** Okay.

When?

**HULDEY.** What?

**MARJORY.** I said: When. Are you going to do it?

(*Beat.*)

**HULDEY.** Well. Soon.

(*Beat.*)

**MARJORY.** Someone else might do it first. If you didn't.

**HULDEY.** What?!