

# 10th Standard - English

## A Shady Plot Summary

### Introduction

'A Shady Plot' is, indeed, a ghost story. It relates how John Hallock feels desperate to write a ghost story as demanded by Jenkins. When he feels that he can't, he sees the ghost of Helen. What happens thereafter is very interesting as it nearly breaks his relationship with his wife.

### John Hallock's writing a ghost story

John Hallock sat down to write a ghost story as demanded by Jenkins. Hallock didn't specialize in ghost stories, though his first fiction had been a ghost story. To get the plot, he started staring at the ceiling.

### A woman ghost appears

Hallock's question about the writing business being delightful was answered by a ghost. He found that a ghost started taking a shape, appearing in parts. The ghost, a woman, looked long and angular with fishy eyes and wore spectacles. She stood before Hallock in full form and glared at him.

### Hallock talks to the ghost

Hallock asked her why she had come. He humoured what would happen if her parts got mixed up? The ghost asked if he hadn't sent for her. She also added that he had been calling on heaven to help him write a story. Hallock wondered.

whether the ghost had been a stenographer applying for a job for his advertisement. She told him to stop bothering them as they were going on strike.

The ghost tells about her past and how I the ghosts work

The ghost told Hallock further that she, too, used to write in the other life. They faced some problems. To counter them they organized 'The Writer's Inspiration Bureau'. They roam here |N and there. After finding a writer without any ideas they are sent to him by the main office. After the case is finished they send a report to the main office.

About Ouija boards

The ghost told Hallock further about Ouija board fanatics. She told that they had stopped wandering. Now they sat at a desk and answered questions. Hallock asked her what she had to do with Ouija board fanatics. She: told him to stop using these boards and she would help him write ghost stories,

Hallock's wife comes

Meanwhile Hallock's wife Lavinia called him. He told the ghost to go. While evaporating the ghost told him not to forget the strike. , Hallock's wife asked him why he was sitting in the dark. When he told her that he was thinking she replied that he had been talking loudly. She told him that she had bought Ouija board very cheaply.

Writing stories with Ouija board

Hallock asked Lavinia what for she had bought that board. She replied that it was to help him write stories.

She told him that he didn't need to consult books. But he needed to get the Ouija board and talk to Napoleon, Helen of Troy etc. Hallock told her that these boards were devilish. So she should return them to buy some other thing.

On reaching home the next day

The next Friday Hallock returned from his office. He saw that the house was illuminated. Reaching home Gladolia told him that his wife had left the message for him to come home 'soon for the company. When Hallock asked about the company she referred to Ouija board party. After dressing he found that the room was full of women belonging to Lavinia's Book Club. They were sitting in couples before the Ouija boards.

Ghost and Hallock's wife

Hallock looked for the ghost among the women but was afraid from his wife's side. At that very moment his wife tapped him. 'She' looked very pretty with bright eyes. She asked Hallock to pair with Miss Laura Hinkle who had no couple. Hallock said 'no' but his wife made him sit with Hinkle.

Ouija board taking to life

Miss Laura Hinkle took Hallock's hands and held them in the position desired before the Ouija board. When she released them the board began to slide around. She asked the board to tell them something. Then the board began to take life. It began to fly around very fast and started spelling out 'T-r-a-i-t-o-r'.

When Hinkle asked the board to explain, it asked her to ask 'him' (Hallock). Ouija board's naming Helen.

Hallock saw that the board was going round faster than ever. Hallock choked and tried to get up but his fingers seemed stuck. Hinkle asked the board what it meant as it referred to Hallock as 'him'. The board spelt 'H-e-l-e-n'. Miss Hinkle asked Lavinia if she knew anyone by the name of Helen. Lavinia told that someone by the name of Helen had been trying to communicate with Hallock through Mrs. Hunt's and Miss Sprinkle's Ouija. Miss Hinkle also added that someone of the name Helen had been calling for her husband.

Hallock after the party

Very soon other couples began to report and call Hallock by name. Lavinia looked at her husband strangely. Miss Hinkle asked that Hallock looked sly. Hallock didn't know when the party ended. He went to his room and into bed. He heard how the last guest said that she had spent a wonderful evening. He felt then after a couple of centuries had elapsed after the clock struck three and he dozed off to sleep.

The ghost appears and talks

Next morning there was no sign of his wife. Hallock went to the library for another try at that story. He had hardly seated at the desk when there came a tap at the door and a slip of paper. The slip declared that the writer (Hallock's wife) was going to her grandmother and her lawyer will talk to him later. Hallock wished he were dead.

The voice of the ghost declared that he ought to have been. She also added that she came as his wife and had been going to get rid of Ouija board.

Hallock and his wife

Hallock asked the ghost why she appeared in parts then. She asked him to give her the time and she would appear in full. She was too tired to materialize in full. He blamed her that due to her he had lost his wife, his home and happiness. Then Lavinia came and Hallock tried to hide the ghost from her. She told him that she was going. Hallock didn't want Lavinia to see the ghost. She told him that he was hiding something from her.

Hallock, Lavinia and 'Helen' together

Lavinia understood and told Hallock that it was very sad on his part to flirt over the Ouija board with the woman. Then she asked where that 'Helen' was. The ghost declared that she herself was 'Helen'. Lavinia looked at her and she should have fainted but she didn't. She told her that she thought she was Helen of Troy. But the ghost replied that she was Helen of Troy, New York. Then she vanished.

Hallock gets a good plot for writing a story

Hallock kissed his wife passionately. Then he felt a sudden strong desire to write. He declared that he had had an excellent plot for a story.