

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

9th Avenue, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi – 110092

Session: 2026-2027 - Notes

Class -X

Subject - English.

Topic: CH-4 A Shady Plot

Answer the following questions :

Q1. How does the ghost undermine the narrator's faith in his ability to write ghost stories?

Ans. The ghost undermines the narrator's confidence by telling him that whenever he is thinking hard, she who groans and clutches her hair. By saying this, she wants to show that it is she who is helping him otherwise he can do nothing but scratch his hair.

Q2. Why does the narrator hesitate to be a partner to Laura Hinkle during the Ouija Board Party?

Ans. John does not want to partner Laura Hinkle during the Ouija Board party because he has been asked by the ghost to not only stop playing, but also dissuade others. The ghost makes it very clear that only then it will help him write his ghost story.

Q3. Why does John wish himself to be dead? Also, explain Helen's role in resolving that phase in his life.

Ans. John is unhappy and upset at the turn of events. For no fault of his, Lavinia decides to go to her grandmother's place. She doubts him and this makes him feel that it is better for him to be dead rather than alive.

Q4. The narrator calls the assembly of women as 'manipulators'. Give reasons for the same.

Ans. The word 'manipulators' means the people who control skilfully anyone or anything. The author wants to say that the ladies were prompting the Ouija board indicator to spell out his name and so called them manipulators. They wanted the narrator's wife to suspect him and they created a fight between the author and his wife.

Q5. John Hallock's wife Lavinia was a spendthrift. Analyse the statement in light of the story 'A Shady Plot'. Give examples from the text to justify your stand.

Ans. John Hallock's wife Lavinia was a spendthrift. She used to spend a lot of money on wasteful pursuits. In the beginning of the story itself when John sat to write a ghost story, his mind started to wander about his wife's excessive shopping habit and how he could cure her of her alarming tendency to take every new fad that came along and work it to



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death. She even bought an Ouija Board at a bargain sale and when the author told him to return it, she refused. The author even worked as a book-keeper for a lumber company so that he could pay for the grocery bills and also for his wife's fancy shopping. She had even organised an Ouija Board party at her home which shows she used to spend money recklessly.

Q6. Imagine yourself to be Lavinia, the author's wife. Write your views about the day's events in a diary entry.

Ans. Friday

31 July 2026

Dear Diary

Today was really an eventful day. Imagine I saw a ghost and I was not afraid a bit to see it. Today I bought the Ouija Board for my husband to help him write some horrifying ghost stories but I was shocked to see his reaction. He told me that all such things as Ouija Boards were devilish, but I found Ouija Boards really thrilling. I got angry with him. Then, in the evening. I requested my husband to be a partner of Laura Hinkle while working on the Ouija Board. He was not ready to be part of the Ouija Board but on my insistence, he agreed. During the process of working on Ouija Boards, a ghost, named Helen, called John a traitor. All the Ouija Boards were calling John's name. I became very angry and told John that I was going to stay at my grandmother's place and that my lawyer would talk to him. My marriage was on rocks. I went to my husband's room to tell him that I was leaving. He reacted in a very indifferent manner. I asked him what he was trying to hide from me. He told me that there was nothing that he was hiding from me but, his facial expressions seemed to betray him. Then, I saw a ghost Helen. When I saw her, a broad satisfying smile spread over my face and I, forgivingly, fell into my husband's arms. Oh! a ghost could have been the cause of the breaking of my marriage. Now I am happy, that we are together.

Lavinia

