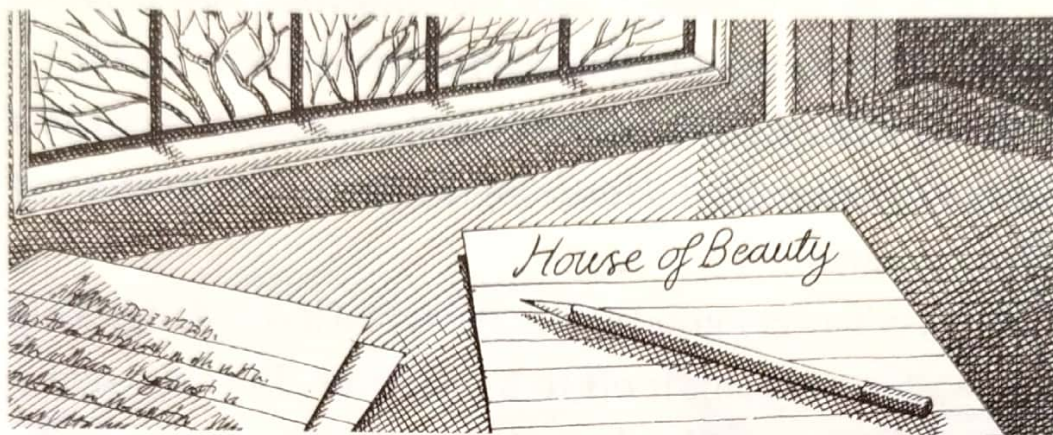


CHAPTER 1

‘Why don’t you write a story?’



Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller was bored. It was a winter morning in 1908, and she was in bed because she was ill.

‘I’m feeling much better today,’ she said to her mother, Clara. ‘I think I’ll get up.’

‘You’re still ill,’ said Clara. ‘The doctor told you to stay in bed and keep warm. And that’s what you’re going to do!’

Agatha was eighteen years old at this time, but in those days daughters had to do what their mothers told them.

‘But I’m *bored*!’

‘Well, do something, then,’ said her mother. ‘Read a book. Or write a story. Yes, why don’t you write a story?’

‘Write a story?’ said Agatha, surprised.

‘Yes,’ her mother said. ‘Like Madge.’

Madge was Agatha’s sister. She was eleven years older