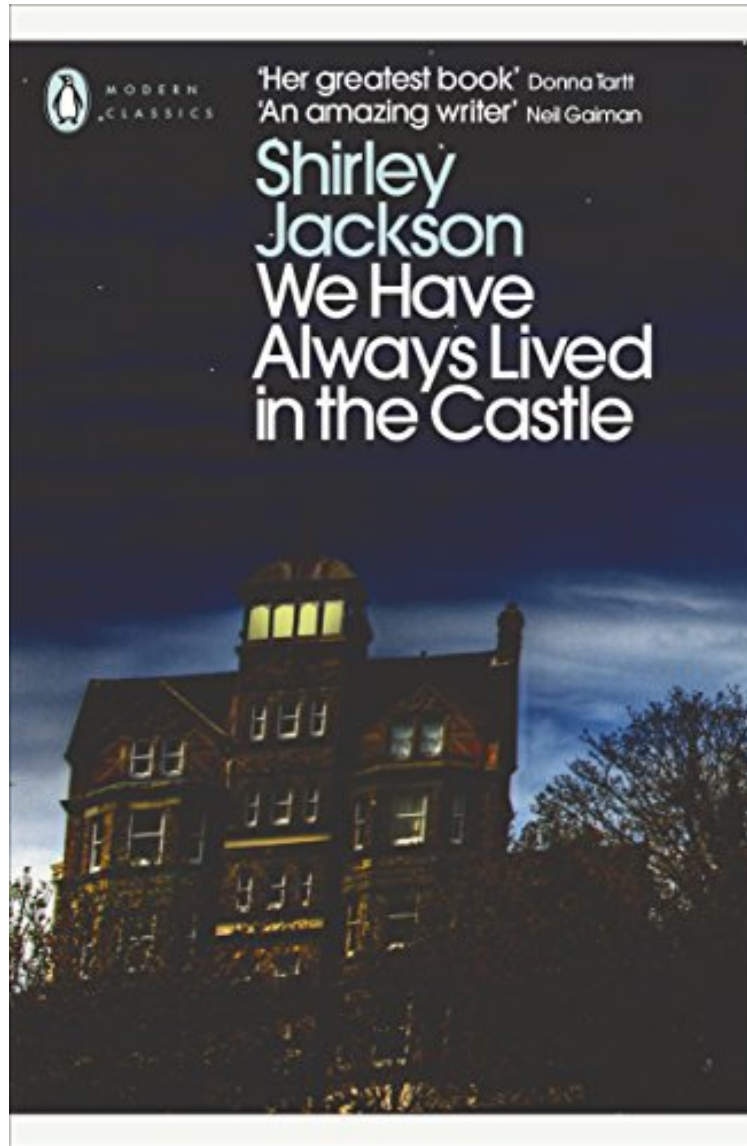


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## We Have Always Lived in the Castle (Penguin Modern Classics)

Von Shirley Jackson

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**Von Shirley Jackson : We Have Always Lived in the Castle (Penguin Modern Classics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Have Always Lived in the Castle (Penguin Modern Classics):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. THE FAMILY THAT STICKS TOGETHER...STAYS TOGETHER...Von lawyeraaui found this book to be a little disappointing, especially in light of the fact that Time magazine, at one time, had named it one of the ten best novels

of the year. The story revolves around a family that has sustained a major tragedy. Apparently, most of the family was murdered at supper one day via the introduction of arsenic into their food. Only three family members survive, sisters Constance and Mary Catherine Blackwood, and their elderly Uncle Julian. Constance, who always cooked for her family, was charged with their murder but acquitted at trial. The surviving three Blackwoods now live in splendid isolation in their mansion, as they are reviled by the villagers. Mary Catherine, the younger sister known affectionately as Merricat, is a strange girl. Bright, imaginative, and compulsive, she has an assortment of rituals that she carries out in her daily activities, which are somewhat limited. She rarely ventures beyond the curtilage of her stately home, except for trepidaciously entering the village to get necessary supplies. Her sister Catherine, however, never ventures beyond the immediate perimeter of her home, though this is clearly something that she wishes to do. Uncle Julian is an invalid, living out his remaining days trying to figure out the mystery behind what had happened to his family that caused them all to be poisoned. They are truly alone, except for the rare visitors who knew their family prior to the tragedy that took place. Even these few visitors are almost too much for them. Still, Constance does her best to entertain them, although Merricat clearly wishes they would not come. Their highly structured world, however, is slowly torn apart, when Charles, a cousin, comes to visit them. He inveigles and tantalizes Constance with visions of having a normal life. Needless to say, Merricat and Charles do not get along, as she perceives him to be the enemy, seeking to disrupt her orderly, though dysfunctional, world. The writing style is spare, taut, and, at times, quite compelling, as well as darkly humorous. Still, what happens to Constance and Merricat is no real surprise. What is problematic is one never really understands what makes Constance tick nor what makes Merricat do what she does. There is no resolution in the book, leaving the reader to fill in the blanks. While this a moderately enjoyable work, readers would do better to seek out Ms. Jackson's dazzling novel, "The Lottery", a much better and more satisfying book.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Berhrend und mit ganz eigenem SoundVon bankiewaEin kleines Stck groe Literatur - die Geschichte ist recht simpel, aber die Art und Weise der Erzhlung ist bezaubernd. Die eigenartige und magisch aufgeladene Welt der jungen Merricat nimmt einen schnell gefangen und man bangt mit ihr darum, dass eben dieser Welt Zerstrung droht. Das Hrbuch wird sehr schn gelesen von Bernadette Dunne.

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Shirley Jackson Strikes AgainVon John ShortThis is the best work from one of the best literary artists of all time. Shirley Jackson is a master story teller, her dark and forbidding works have given her a massive following. I reccomend all things from this under-appreciated author, she has an amazing range from the hilarious to the truly terrifying. This book is quite possibly her very best work and deserved to be read again and again.

KurzbeschreibungShirley Jackson's masterpiece: the deliciously dark and funny story of Merricat, tomboy teenager, beloved sister - and possible lunatic. 'Her greatest book ... at once whimsical and harrowing, a miniaturist's charmingly detailed fantasy sketched inside a mausoleum ... Through depths and depths and bloodwarm depths we fall, until the surface is only an eerie gleam high above, nearly forgotten; and the deeper we sink, the deeper we want to go' Donna Tartt, author of *The Goldfinch*Living in the Blackwood family home with only her sister Constance and her Uncle Julian for company, Merricat just wants to preserve their delicate way of life. But ever since Constance was acquitted of murdering the rest of the family, the world isn't leaving the Blackwoods alone. And when Cousin Charles arrives, armed with overtures of friendship and a desperate need to get into the safe, Merricat must do everything in her power to protect the remaining family. This Penguin edition includes an afterword by the acclaimed novelist Joyce Carol Oates. All Shirley Jackson's other novels, plus *The Lottery* and *Other Stories*, are available in Penguin Modern Classics.

Shirley Jackson was born in California in 1916. When her short story *The Lottery* was first published in *The New Yorker* in 1948, readers were so horrified they sent her hate mail; it has since become one of the most iconic American stories of all time. Her first novel, *The Road Through the Wall*, was published in the same year and was followed by five more: *Hangsaman*, *The Bird's Nest*, *The Sundial*, *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, widely seen as her masterpiece. In addition to her dark, brilliant novels, she wrote lightly fictionalized magazine pieces about family life with her four children and her husband, the critic Stanley Edgar Hyman. Shirley Jackson died in her sleep in 1965 at the age of 48.

'The world of Shirley Jackson is eerie and unforgettable ... She is a true master' A. M. Homes'A masterpiece of Gothic suspense' Joyce Carol Oates'If you haven't read *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* ... you have missed out on something marvellous' Neil Gaiman.deVisitors call seldom at Blackwood House. Taking tea at the scene of a multiple poisoning, with a suspected murderess as one's host, is a perilous business. For a start, the talk tends to turn to arsenic. "It happened in this very room, and we still have our dinner in here every night," explains Uncle Julian, continually rehearsing the details of the fatal family meal. "My sister made these this morning," says Merricat, politely proffering a plate of rum cakes, fresh from the poisoner's kitchen. *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Shirley Jackson's 1962 novel, is full of a macabre and sinister humor, and Merricat herself, its amiable narrator, is one of the great unhinged heroines of literature. "What place would be better for us than this?" she asks, of the neat, secluded realm she shares with her uncle and with her beloved older

sister, Constance. "Who wants us, outside? The world is full of terrible people." Merricat has developed an idiosyncratic system of rules and protective magic, burying talismanic objects beneath the family estate, nailing them to trees, ritually revisiting them. She has made "a powerful taut web which never loosened, but held fast to guard us" against the distrust and hostility of neighboring villagers. Or so she believes. But at last the magic fails. A stranger arrives--cousin Charles, with his eye on the Blackwood fortune. He disturbs the sisters' careful habits, installing himself at the head of the family table, unearthing Merricat's treasures, talking privately to Constance about "normal lives" and "boy friends." Unable to drive him away by either polite or occult means, Merricat adopts more desperate methods. The result is crisis and tragedy, the revelation of a terrible secret, the convergence of the villagers upon the house, and a spectacular unleashing of collective spite. The sisters are propelled further into seclusion and solipsism, abandoning "time and the orderly pattern of our old days" in favor of an ever-narrowing circuit of ritual and shadow. They have themselves become talismans, to be alternately demonized and propitiated, darkly, with gifts. Jackson's novel emerges less as a study in eccentricity and more--like some of her other fictions--as a powerful critique of the anxious, ruthless processes involved in the maintenance of normality itself. "Poor strangers," says Merricat contentedly at last, studying trespassers from the darkness behind the barricaded Blackwood windows. "They have so much to be afraid of." --Sarah Waters.com

Visitors call seldom at Blackwood House. Taking tea at the scene of a multiple poisoning, with a suspected murderess as one's host, is a perilous business. For a start, the talk tends to turn to arsenic. "It happened in this very room, and we still have our dinner in here every night," explains Uncle Julian, continually rehearsing the details of the fatal family meal. "My sister made these this morning," says Merricat, politely proffering a plate of rum cakes, fresh from the poisoner's kitchen. *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Shirley Jackson's 1962 novel, is full of a macabre and sinister humor, and Merricat herself, its amiable narrator, is one of the great unhinged heroines of literature. "What place would be better for us than this?" she asks, of the neat, secluded realm she shares with her uncle and with her beloved older sister, Constance. "Who wants us, outside? The world is full of terrible people." Merricat has developed an idiosyncratic system of rules and protective magic, burying talismanic objects beneath the family estate, nailing them to trees, ritually revisiting them. She has made "a powerful taut web which never loosened, but held fast to guard us" against the distrust and hostility of neighboring villagers. Or so she believes. But at last the magic fails. A stranger arrives--cousin Charles, with his eye on the Blackwood fortune. He disturbs the sisters' careful habits, installing himself at the head of the family table, unearthing Merricat's treasures, talking privately to Constance about "normal lives" and "boy friends." Unable to drive him away by either polite or occult means, Merricat adopts more desperate methods. The result is crisis and tragedy, the revelation of a terrible secret, the convergence of the villagers upon the house, and a spectacular unleashing of collective spite. The sisters are propelled further into seclusion and solipsism, abandoning "time and the orderly pattern of our old days" in favor of an ever-narrowing circuit of ritual and shadow. They have themselves become talismans, to be alternately demonized and propitiated, darkly, with gifts. Jackson's novel emerges less as a study in eccentricity and more--like some of her other fictions--as a powerful critique of the anxious, ruthless processes involved in the maintenance of normality itself. "Poor strangers," says Merricat contentedly at last, studying trespassers from the darkness behind the barricaded Blackwood windows. "They have so much to be afraid of." --Sarah Waters