



We Have Always Lived in the Castle

By Shirley Jackson

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Merricat Blackwood lives on the family estate with her sister Constance and her uncle Julian. Not long ago there were seven Blackwoods—until a fatal dose of arsenic found its way into the sugar bowl one terrible night. Acquitted of the murders, Constance has returned home, where Merricat protects her from the curiosity and hostility of the villagers. Their days pass in happy isolation until cousin Charles appears. Only Merricat can see the danger, and she must act swiftly to keep Constance from his grasp.

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We Have Always Lived in the Castle By Shirley Jackson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #759350 in Books
- Brand: Penguin Books
- Published on: 1984-06-05
- Released on: 1984-06-05
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.73" h x .42" w x 5.08" l, .33 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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*

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Since the mysterious death of four family members, the superstitious Mary Katherine "Merricat" Blackwood, her ailing uncle Julian, and agoraphobic sister Constance have lived in a bizarre but contented state of isolation. But when cousin Charles arrives in search of the Blackwood fortune, a terrible family secret is revealed. Bernadette Dunne's reading is flawlessly paced and suspenseful. The voices she provides the cast of characters are spot on: precocious Merricat is haunted and increasingly desperate; Constance is doting but detached; Uncle Julian is both pleasantly dotty and utterly unnerving; and Charles is the conniving villain listeners will love to hate. A treat for fans of mystery and suspense.

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Review

"A marvelous elucidation of life...a story full of craft and full of mystery" —*The New York Times Book Review*

"A witch's brew of eerie power and startling novelty" —*The New York Times*

“I was thrilled by the genuine but meaningful strangeness of Shirley Jackson’s *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*.” —*George Saunders*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Crow:

The ability that you get from *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* will be the more deep you looking the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this kind of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* instantly.

Sean Scruggs:

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Jacqueline Thompson:

That publication can make you to feel relax. This particular book *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* was vibrant and of course has pictures on there. As we know that book *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* has many kinds or variety. Start from kids until teenagers. For example *Naruto* or *Private investigator Conan* you can read and believe you are the character on there. So , not at all of book are generally make you bored, any it makes you feel happy, fun and loosen up. Try to choose the best book for you personally and try to like reading that.

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