

On Shirley Jackson
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Shirley Jackson (1916-1965) was an American writer. She is best known for the short story "The Lottery," published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 1948. Her book *The Haunting of Hill House* is considered one of the best ghost stories ever written.

The following is from a biography of Jackson by Ruth Franklin, *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life* (Liveright, 2016) p. 469.

Diary entries near the end of Jackson's life (she typed them using only lowercase letters):

i think about the glorious world of the future. think about me
think about me think about me. not to be controlled, not to
controlled. alone, safe.

As she contemplated what she had written, she felt began to
feel

a kind of sadness, almost a sense of loss; i am giving up
something very important.

But

the new life is worth it, i do believe that. but I cannot always
remember that what I am losing is cancerous.

Whatever the cost, it is worth it

to be separate, to be alone, to stand and walk alone, not to be
different and weak and helpless and degraded . . . and shut out,
not shut out, shutting out.

Jackson's biographer notes that these diary entries reflect the transformation of two characters in Jackson's novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Merricat and Constance: "At the beginning of the novel, the two sisters are 'shut out' from the world outside, intimidated by the villagers' hostility from pursuing the most minimal contact. By the end, they are 'shutting out' intruders, barricaded in their kitchen, alone and in control and perfectly happy."

laughter is possible laughter is possible laughter is possible.