

## Freshman Summer Reading Assignment, 2019

### *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, by Shirley Jackson

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You will write a brief paragraph for each section.

**PART I:** In this novel, Jackson both consciously includes and sometimes disregards classic Gothic Elements (**SEE SECOND PAGE**). Sometimes she even includes them but in an inverted or twisted way.

**Your job is to:**

- 1) Read through the attached list of Gothic Elements.
- 2) Find **TWO DIFFERENT** elements Jackson includes in this novel – either using an example in a standard, classic way or inverting one of the usual elements and twisting it around.
- 3) Find a specific quote from the text that illustrates **each of the TWO** elements you chose.
- 4) Beneath each quote, explain how that quote reflects an element of the Gothic novel. Each explanation should be 2-3 sentences long.
- 5) **WRITE IT OUT FULLY in MLA format: TYPED, 12 pt font, double spaced, Times New Roman, 1" margins, correct heading, correct citation of page number (200). When quoting dialogue, use three quotation marks.**

**PART II:** There are some very...interesting ☺ characters in this novel. There is not a “right” or “wrong” answer for this section, BUT you must fully explain your answers and use appropriate support to earn full credit.

**Your job is to** explain how readers should feel about these three characters: Mericat, Constance, and Uncle Julian. Do we feel sorry for them, or do they deserve what they get? Do we root for or against them? OR is there an odd mix of emotions that we end up feeling for them? **YOU ONLY NEED TO WRITE ABOUT TWO CHARACTERS.**

- 1) Find a quote that you feel best captures each of the **two** characters (two separate quotes). It can be a description of him/her, something said by him/her, and action that represents him/her.
- 2) Beneath each quote, explain how that quote reflects what you’re claiming about that character. Each explanation should be 2-3 sentences long.
- 3) **WRITE IT OUT FULLY in MLA format: TYPED, 12 pt font, double spaced, Times New Roman, 1" margins, correct heading, correct citation of page number (200). When quoting dialogue, use three quotation marks.**
- 4)

**PART III:** This part focuses on Charles.

**Your job is to:**

- 1) First explain what Charles’ role is in the story. Is he supposed to be a “savior,” bringing them out in the Real World and thus “saving them” (especially Constance) from themselves? Or is he a dark character, there only for his own selfish motives? Does he help or harm them? This answer will be MULTIPLE sentences long. **\*\*Make sure you do NOT write “I think” or “I feel” that Charles is a dark character; I know that you think it because you are writing that argument, so simply write: Charles is a dark character.... \*\***
- 2) Find **ONE quote** that you feel illustrate Charles as a character—(make sure each quote backs up your argument for question 1 in Part III).
- 3) Beneath your quote, explain how that quote reflects what you’re claiming about that character. Each explanation should be 2-3 sentences long.
- 4) **WRITE IT OUT FULLY in MLA format: TYPED, 12 pt font, double spaced, Times New Roman, 1" margins, correct heading, correct citation of page number (200). When quoting dialogue, use three quotation marks.**

## **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- **THIS IS AN INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENT.** This means that you may not work with another student on this assignment. The work must be entirely your own.
- **CONSULTING AN OUTSIDE SOURCE SUCH AS SPARKNOTES OR SHMOOP IS AN HONOR CODE VIOLATION. If we suspect you have used Shmoop, Sparknotes or any other such outside source, we will consider it a disciplinary issue and will turn your work over for investigation.**
- YOUR GRADES ON YOUR SUMMER READING WORK ARE **VERY IMPORTANT.** They will have a BIG impact on your average for the first quarter. Since there typically aren’t many grades earned during the first quarter, each grade counts more heavily. Earning a zero or an F (even a C or a B) on **this work will have serious and lingering consequences.** Note that **average work will earn you an average grade.** Putting in minimal effort will earn you no higher than a C. Although you will not earn a high grade based on effort alone (It’s about overall **QUALITY**), If you wish to earn a higher grade, your work should be insightful and thoughtfully written, which will require additional effort. **Take this work seriously and do your best.**

## Elements of the Gothic Novel

### ***Gothic elements include the following:***

1. Setting in a castle. The action takes place in and around an old castle, sometimes seemingly abandoned, sometimes occupied. The castle often contains secret passages, trap doors, secret rooms, dark or hidden staircases, and possibly ruined sections. The castle may be near or connected to caves, which lend their own haunting flavor with their underground paths, claustrophobia, and mystery.
2. An atmosphere of mystery and suspense. The work is pervaded by a threatening feeling, a fear enhanced by the unknown. Often the plot itself is built around a mystery, such as unknown parentage, a disappearance, or some other inexplicable event. Elements 3, 4, and 5 below contribute to this atmosphere.
3. An ancient prophecy is connected with the castle or its inhabitants (either former or present). The prophecy is usually obscure, partial, or confusing. "What could it mean?" In more watered down modern examples, this may amount to merely a legend: "It's said that the ghost of old man Krebs still wanders these halls."
4. Omens, portents, visions. A character may have a disturbing dream vision, or some phenomenon may be seen as a portent of coming events. For example, if the statue of the lord of the manor falls over, it may portend his death.
5. Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events. Dramatic, amazing events occur, such as ghosts or giants walking, or inanimate objects (such as a suit of armor or painting) coming to life. In some works, the events are ultimately given a natural explanation, while in others the events are truly supernatural.
6. High, even overwrought emotion. The narration may be highly sentimental, and the characters are often overcome by anger, sorrow, surprise, and especially, terror. Characters suffer from raw nerves and a feeling of impending doom. Crying and emotional speeches are frequent. Breathlessness and panic are common.
7. Women in distress. As an appeal to the pathos and sympathy of the reader, the female characters often face events that leave them fainting, terrified, screaming, and/or sobbing. A lonely, pensive, and oppressed heroine is often the central figure of the novel, so her sufferings are even more pronounced and the focus of attention.
8. Women threatened by a powerful, impulsive, tyrannical male. One or more male characters has the power, as king, lord of the manor, father, or guardian, to demand that one or more of the female characters do something intolerable. The woman may be commanded to marry someone she does not love (it may even be the powerful male himself), or commit a crime.
9. The metonymy of gloom and horror. Metonymy is a subtype of metaphor, in which something (like rain) is used to stand for something else (like sorrow). For example, the film industry likes to use metonymy as a short hand, so we often notice that it is raining in funeral scenes. Note that the following metonymies for "doom and gloom" all suggest some element of mystery, danger, or the supernatural, wind, especially howling rain, especially blowing doors grating on rusty hinges sighs, moans, howls, eerie sounds footsteps approaching clanking chains lights in abandoned rooms gusts of wind blowing out lights characters trapped in a room doors suddenly slamming shut ruins of buildings baying of distant dogs (or wolves?) thunder and lightning crazed laughter.