



Come Along with Me: Classic Short Stories and an Unfinished Novel (Penguin Classics)

By Shirley Jackson

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A haunting and psychologically driven collection from Shirley Jackson that includes her best-known story "The Lottery"

At last, Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" enters Penguin Classics, sixty-five years after it shocked America audiences and elicited the most responses of any piece in *New Yorker* history. In her gothic visions of small-town America, Jackson, the author of such masterworks as *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, turns an ordinary world into a supernatural nightmare. This eclectic collection goes beyond her horror writing, revealing the full spectrum of her literary genius. In addition to *Come Along with Me*, Jackson's unfinished novel about the quirky inner life of a lonely widow, it features sixteen short stories and three lectures she delivered during her last years.

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Come Along with Me: Classic Short Stories and an Unfinished Novel (Penguin Classics) By Shirley Jackson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #62647 in Books
- Published on: 2013-02-26
- Released on: 2013-02-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.70" h x .70" w x 5.00" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“Everything this author wrote . . . has in it the dignity and plausibility of myth. . . . Shirley Jackson knew better than any writer since Hawthorne the value of haunted things.” — *The New York Times Book Review*

“Shirley Jackson was a bright, crafty . . . very impressive maker of stories . . . *Come Along With Me* is a kind of memorial to her . . . an engaging volume.” — *Chicago Sunday Times*

“Leaves no doubt as to Miss Jackson’s craftsmanship and power . . . utterly convincing detail that breaks down the reader’s disbelief.” — **Granville Hicks**, *Saturday Review*

About the Author

Shirley Jackson (1916–1965) received wide critical acclaim for her short story "The Lottery," which was first published in the *New Yorker* in 1948. Her novels include *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, *The Sundial*, and *The Haunting of Hill House*.

Laura Miller is a cofounder of Salon.com, where she is a senior writer. She is the editor of *The Salon.com Reader's Guide to Contemporary Authors* and the introducer of the Penguin Classics edition of *The Haunting of Hill House*.

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From *Come Along With Me*:

I always believe in eating when I can. I had plenty of money and no name when I got off the train and even though I had had lunch in the dining car I liked the idea of stopping off for coffee and a doughnut while I decided exactly which way I intended to go, or which way I was intended to go. I do not believe in turning one way or another without consideration, but then neither do I believe that anything is positively necessary at any given time. I got off the train with plenty of money; I needed a name and a place to go; enjoyment and excitement and a fine high gleefulness I knew I could provide on my own.

A woman said to me in the train station, “My sister might want to rent a room to a nice lady; she’s got this little crippled kid.”

I could use a little crippled kid, I thought, and so I said, “Where does your sister live, dear?”

A fine high gleefulness; I think you understand me; I have everything I want.

I sold the house at a profit. Once I got Hughie buried—my God, he was a lousy painter—I only had to make a thousand and three trips back and forth from the barn—which was a studio, which was a mess—to the house. At my age and size—both forty-four, in case it’s absolutely vital to know—I was carrying those paintings and half-finished canvasses (“This is the one the artist was working on the morning of the day he died,” and it was just as lousy as all the rest; not even imminent glowing death could help that Hughie) and books and boxes of letters and more than anything else cartons and cartons of things Hughie saved, his old

dance programs and marriage licenses and fans and the like. It was none of it anything I ever wanted to see again, I promise you, but I didn't dare throw any of it away for fear Hughie might turn up someday asking, the way they sometimes do, and knowing Hughie it would be the carbon copy of something back in 1946 he wanted. Everything he might ever possibly come around asking for went into the barn; one thousand and three trips back and forth.

I am not a callous person and no one Hughie ever knew could possibly call me practical, but I had waited long enough. I knew I could sell the house. The furniture went to everyone, and I did think that was funny. They came up to me at the auction, people I had known for years, people who had come to the funeral, people who had sat on the chairs and eaten at the dining-room table and sometimes passed out on the beds, if the truth were known, and they said things like "I bought your little maple desk and anytime you want it back it's waiting for you," and "Listen, we picked up the silver service, but it's nothing personal," and "You know the piano will find a happy home with us," and "We are grieving with you today"—no, that one they said at the funeral. In any case, all the people I had known for years came to the auction and the ones who had the nerve came up and spoke to me, sometimes embarrassed because here they were peeking at the undersprings of my sofa, and sometimes just plain brazen because they had gotten something of mine they wanted. I heard one woman—no names, of course; no one has a name yet—saying to another woman that the dining-room breakfront had always been wasted on me, which was true; I only kept it at all because I was afraid my dead grandmother would come around asking. Actually, almost all of it was wasted on me. It was Hughie's idea. "You come of such a nice family," he used to say to me, "your people were all such cultivated educated people; try to remember."

So that was how I started out. I'd thought about it for a long time of course—not that I positively expected I was going to have to bury Hughie, but he had a good life—and everything went the way I used to figure it would. I sold the house, I auctioned off the furniture, I put all the paintings and boxes in the barn, I erased my old name and took my initials off everything, and I got on the train and left.

I can't say I actually chose the city I was going to; it was actually and truly the only one available at the moment; I hadn't ever been there and it seemed a good size and I had enough in my pocket to pay the fare. When I got off the train I took a deep breath of the dirty city air and carried my suitcase and my pocketbook and my fur stole—Hughie wasn't selfish, I don't want to give a wrong impression; I always had everything I wanted—and stopped at the counter for coffee and doughnuts.

"My sister might want to rent a room to a nice lady," this woman said to me, "she's got this little crippled kid."

So I said, "Where does your sister live, dear?"

That was where I got my first direction, you see. Smith Street. Where I was going to be living for a while.

The city is a pretty city, particularly after living in the country; I have nothing actually against trees and grass, of course, but Hughie always wanted to live in the country. There was a zoo somewhere in this city, and a college, and a few big stores, and streetcars, which I believe you don't often see any more. I knew there was an art gallery—who could be married to Hughie, that painter, and not know about an art gallery?—and a symphony orchestra, and surely a little theater group, mostly wives and fairies; if I liked the city and I stayed I might look up the little theater group; there was an art movie and I hoped at least one good restaurant; I am a first-rate cook.

More than anything else, more than art movies or zoos, I wanted to talk to people; I was starved for strangers. I began with the woman at the counter in the railroad station.

“She has this little crippled kid.”

“Where does your sister live, dear?”

“She was married to the same man for twenty-seven years and all he left her was the house and this little kid, he’s crippled. Me, I don’t like a man like that.”

“They don’t leave you with much, and that’s a fact.”

“After twenty-seven years married to the same man she shouldn’t have to take in roomers.”

“But if one of her roomers turns out to be me it might all have been worthwhile.”

“That’s where I’ve been, visiting my sister.” She put down her coffee cup. “I come to visit her. And then I take the train back home. You have to take the train to get from my house to hers.” She looked at me carefully, as though she might be wondering whether I could remember my own name. “She lives on Smith Street. You’ll know the house. It’s big. She’s got this sign ROOMS.”

“At least he left her a big house,” I said.

“Up and down stairs all the time, keeping up a big house these days. She’s not getting any younger, and the kid.”

“Well, we’re none of us,” I said.

After that I talked to a man on a corner; he was waiting for a streetcar. “Does this streetcar go to Smith Street?” I asked him.

“What streetcar?” He turned and looked down the street.

“The one you’re waiting for; this is a car stop, isn’t it?”

He looked again, and we marveled together at the delights of the city, where you could stand on a corner and a streetcar would come. “Where you say?” he asked me.

“Smith Street.”

“You live there?”

“Yes. I got this little crippled kid. Big house.”

“No,” he said, “you get that car across the street. Because across the street is going the other way. How long you say you’ve lived there?”

“Twenty-seven years. With the same man.”

“He any better at catching streetcars than you are?”

“He’s a motorman,” I told him. “I try to avoid his route.”

This clearly sounded right to him. “Women always checking up,” he said, and turned away from me.

Then I talked to an old lady in a bookshop, who was so very tired that she leaned her elbows on piles of

books as we talked; she told me that the city was hell on books, because of the college, and they stole a thousand paperbacks a year. "They can't seem to think of them as books," she said, furious, "books they don't dare steal because of the covers. Also they know I'm watching."

"Do you sell a lot of books?"

"It's the college," she said. "They come here to get an education." She laughed, furious. "No one speaks English any more," she said. She took her elbows off the pile of books and went back to sit down on a dirty old chair in the back of the store. "I'm watching," she called out, "I'm still watching," but I was leaving.

I went to the correct side of the street and put my suitcase down and waited carrying my pocketbook and my fur stole until a streetcar came by reading SMITH STREET and I decided well this is certainly the streetcar they meant when they said it went to Smith Street. I swung my suitcase on and climbed up behind it; you know, *they* know old ladies—not me—and little crippled kids and pregnant women and maybe sick people with broken arms are all going to have to ride on those streetcars; you'd think they didn't want passengers, the way they make those steps. I suppose the salary they pay the motorman he wouldn't help anyone anyway. He looked at me; he was sitting down driving his streetcar and I was climbing on with my suitcase and my pocketbook and my fur stole, and I figured if he wasn't going to help me I wasn't going to help him, so I said, "Does this streetcar go to Smith Street?"

He looked at me; I must say I like it better when they look at you; a lot of the time people seem to be scared of finding out that other people have real faces, as though if you looked at a stranger clearly and honestly and with both eyes you might find yourself learning something you didn't actually want to know. "Lady," he said, "I promise you. This streetcar goes to Smith Street every trip. That's why," he said, and he was not smiling, "that's why it says so on the front."

"You're sure?" I was not smiling either and he knew he had met someone as stubborn as he was, so he quit.

"Yes, lady," he said. "I'm almost positive."

"Thank you," I said. It never pays to let a minute like that slip by; every word counts. I might never see that motorman again, but on the other hand, I might be living on Smith Street and ride home with him every night. He might get to calling me by whatever name I finally picked out and I might take to asking him every night how his wife's asthma was today and did his daughter break up with that guy who stole the money and I might take to asking him every night, "Say, driver, does this streetcar go to Smith Street?"

And he might say, every night, not smiling, "Yes, lady, it surely does."

Hughie would not have thought any of that was funny. In case he ever does come back asking I will certainly remember not to tell him.

There is a kind of controlled madness to streetcars; they swing along as though they haven't quite come to terms with tracks yet, and haven't really decided whether tracks are here to stay or streetcars are here to stay on tracks; they swing and tilt and knock people around, especially people who are trying to hold onto a suitcase and a pocketbook and a fur stole. I sat there sliding around on the seat and wondering if anyone was laughing at me and wondering if maybe I was the streetcar type after all, and outside the window the city went by. I saw the biggest store in town and thought that someday very soon I would be in there, and I might say, "Well, if you haven't got this blouse in a size forty-four I'll just run across the street and try there." I would have to have a name before I could open any charge accounts anywhere. "I'd rather you didn't carry money," Hughie used to say, "I want you to go into a store and pick out what you want and tell them your name and walk out; I don't care if it's a thousand dollars, just tell them your name and take what you want."

There were hotels; I might come back for a visit someday, and see all my old friends on Smith Street; I might go tea-dancing at the Splendid Hotel, although one letter was missing from its marquee; I might drop into the lobby of the Royal Hotel to hear who was being paged, and pick up a name that way. I saw a drugstore where I might get a prescription filled and buy shampoo, I saw a shop where I might buy records and a place to get my shoes repaired and a laundry and a candy store and a grocery and a leather shop and a pet shop and a toy store. It was a proper little city, correct and complete, set up exactly for my private use, fitted out with quite the right people, waiting for me to come. I slid around on the streetcar seat and thought that they had done it all very well.

I must say that motorman got the last word. I was still looking out the window when he turned around and yelled, "Smith Street." In case there was any doubt about who he was yelling at he pointed his finger at me.

"How is your wife's asthma?" I asked him when I came down the aisle with my suitcase and my pocketbook and my fur stole.

"Better, thank you," he said. "Watch your step."

It was Smith Street all right; no one had lied to me yet. They wanted to make sure I got there as planned; there was a sign on the corner saying SMITH STREET.

I was glad to see that there were trees; far down, at the end, I could see what looked like a little park, and on either side of Smith Street going down to the park there were trees. I thought I would enjoy coming home under the trees, in the rain, perhaps, or in the fall when the leaves were dropping. I thought I would enjoy hearing the sound of the leaves brushing against my window. The houses were the kind no one has built for a good twenty-seven years, big and ample and made for people who liked to sit on their own front porches and watch their neighbors. There were lawns and bushes and garden hoses, there were dogs. The house I wanted was on my right, about halfway down the block; it was a big house with a sign saying ROOMS although I didn't see any little kids looking crippled. I stood across the street from the house for a few minutes; here I am, I thought, here I am.

No one, anywhere, anytime, had given me any word of any other place to go. This was the only objective I had; if I didn't go in here they wouldn't tell me any other place to go. I wondered which room was going to be mine and whether I would look down from its window onto the street and see myself standing there looking up and waiting; by the time I looked out of the window I would have to have a name.

Right then I wished I could sit down for a minute and maybe have a little something to eat; nothing looks sillier than a forty-four-year-old woman standing on a sidewalk with a suitcase and a pocketbook and a fur stole trying to think up a name for herself. Somewhere down the street someone called a dog, calling "Here, Rover," and I thought that Rover was probably a good name but it was not actually exactly what I was looking for; I thought I might stop someone going by and ask for their name but no one wants to give away a name that might be terribly important to keep, and even if they did tell it to me I might not be able to spell it or even pronounce it right and if you've got a name at all you've got to be able to say it out loud. I thought of Laura, but Laura was my mother's name. I didn't want any more of Hughie and his names, and Bertha was my grandmother and who wants to be named Bertha, particularly after her grandmother? I thought of Muriel but that just sounds like someone who gets raped and robbed in an alley. I once had a cat named Edward, and because he was silver I changed his name to Stargazer and then in the spring to Robin, and when I got tired, which I did very soon, of a cat named Robin, I tried to change his name to Edward again and he got sick and died. You have to be terribly careful with names; one too many and you lose.

I thought of Jean and Helen and Margaret, but I knew people called by all those names, and perhaps I would not enjoy answering to them; I thought of Gertrude and Goneril and I thought of Diana, which was dead

wrong and Minerva, which was closer but silly. I knew I had to think of something right away, and I got a little chill at the back of my neck; what is really more frightening than being without a name, nothing to call yourself, nothing to say when they ask you who you are? Then it fell on me; I heard it: Angela. It was right, Angela was the name I had come all this way to find.

The rest of it was easy; I had said it already. Angela Motorman. Mrs. Angela Motorman.

So Mrs. Angela Motorman walked slowly and decently up the walk to the fine old house with the sign in the window saying ROOMS. She was carrying her suitcase and her pocketbook and her fur stole, and she stopped for a minute to look the house over very carefully; a lady cannot be too wary of the company she may find herself among, a lady chooses her place of residence with caution. As she set her foot on the steps she put her shoulders back and took a deep breath: Mrs. Angela Motorman, who never walked on earth before.

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