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Composition in 2 Genres

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To complete my composition, I read the book *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson. My work addresses two characters in the book that we do not get the chance to know in depth, Constance and Charles Blackwood. The audience I am trying to reach is the casual reader who has read and has a general understanding of the book and its characters. I want to show that Constance is more than just Merricat's sister. She plays a very important role in the story. She is the backbone of the household and is keeping things afloat. In addition, I want to demonstrate that Charles is more than simply a villain planted into the story. I want to emphasize his inner motivations and essentially why he is the way he is.

Constance is a very important character in the book. She is the one running the household. She is responsible for both her younger sister and her sick uncle Julian. Although we can see this key role she has in the book, her sacrifices should not be overlooked. She was on trial for murder over something her little sister did. She lost most of her family and was demonized by people who did not even know her. She retreated from the outside world and devoted herself to what remained of her family. This is why I decided to visualize her struggles and sacrifices. One moment in particular that made me want to focus on this was a dialogue between Merricat and Constance where she asks her older sister an interesting question. ““When I’m as old as Uncle Julian will you take care of me?” I asked her. ‘If I’m still around,’ she said, and I was chilled.” (Jackson 50). This is a moment in which Merricat realizes that Constance will not be around forever to look after her.

This also made me realize Constance's devotion and great contributions to her sister's life. I tried to highlight the themes of sacrifice and unspoken hardship in my drawing. At first, I visualized an idea that blatantly represented the themes I wanted to address. My idea was to compose a cartoon depicting Constance with a large weight on her back that would represent all of the burdens she carries and sacrifices she has made. This was a decent idea, however, I did not want to make the message too obvious. I decided to depict Constance facing away from the gates, representing her isolation and her devotion to family. I included silhouettes of the villagers watching her to represent how she was alienated by society. This approach felt the most effective to me because the audience is able to see things in Constance's point of view.

Charles is the scheming and greedy cousin of the two sisters. He is cold and calculated. He would do anything to get his hands on a fortune. He was said to strongly resemble his uncle, who was their father. He also shares the same desire for wealth as his uncle. What ultimately made Charles as bitter and greedy as he is? Although he comes from a wealthy family, his father Arthur did not leave him anything when he died. He does not live lavishly like the rest of his family. He even had to take the bus to go meet his cousins. Charles has a strong jealousy of what his cousins have and wants it for himself. He feels entitled to wealth simply because of how bad he wants it. He has no remorse for his actions. At one point, after his presence caused the destruction of his cousins' home and the death of his uncle, Charles showed up once again pretending he wants to make things right. Meanwhile, he has a photographer ready with him to take pictures of the girls that he could profit from. This moment inspired me to create a journal entry for his character to explore his attributes. I had it take place close to the beginning of his visit when he realizes that he cannot win Merricat over and that she hates him. I made the paper look like it had been recovered from the housefire. This was my favorite genre out of the two because I found it fun to write in his

perspective and to write in that style. I also enjoyed making the pages look worn out and burnt. This genre effectively conveys the character of Charles to the audience.

Works Cited

Jackson, Shirley. *We Have Always Lived In The Castle*. Penguin Books, 1962.