

# Shirley Jackson

## Postcard of "Olivet, Bords du Loiret, Château Villebourgeons",

c. 1915

Photographer and Publisher  
Unknown

Lithograph on card stock

This postcard, featuring a view of a château along the banks of the Loire river in France, served as the inspiration for Shirley Jackson's fictionalized autobiographical essay "Ghosts of Loiret," written in 1958. In the story Shirley receives a group of picture postcards featuring old houses as a birthday gift from her husband, Stanley. Jackson claims that one of the postcards, featuring the "Château du Loiret," has two people that keep appearing, disappearing, and reappearing on a balcony. The story continues with comic anecdotes about Shirley's worries that their own house may be becoming haunted, at one point noting, "I have never liked the theory that poltergeists only come into houses where there are children, because I think it is simply too much for any one house to have poltergeists and children." The postcard and the story it inspired provide insight into Jackson's creative mind and how she combined fact and fiction seamlessly into stories that are all the more unnerving because one can't always differentiate between the two.