

the bell jar pdf

the bell jar pdf is an increasingly sought-after resource for readers interested in Sylvia Plath's groundbreaking semi-autobiographical novel. As a powerful exploration of mental health, identity, and societal expectations, *The Bell Jar* has captivated generations since its original publication. For students, researchers, and literature enthusiasts, accessing *The Bell Jar* PDF format offers convenient and portable reading. This article delves into the significance of *The Bell Jar*, the availability and considerations surrounding *The Bell Jar* PDF, and the novel's broader literary impact. Additionally, it provides guidance on how to find legitimate versions of *The Bell Jar* PDF while respecting copyright laws. Understanding these aspects ensures readers appreciate the novel's depth while navigating digital accessibility responsibly.

- Understanding *The Bell Jar* and Its Themes
- Availability and Legality of *The Bell Jar* PDF
- How to Access *The Bell Jar* PDF Safely
- Literary Significance of *The Bell Jar*
- Benefits of Reading *The Bell Jar* in PDF Format

Understanding *The Bell Jar* and Its Themes

The Bell Jar, written by Sylvia Plath, is a profound novel that explores the complexities of mental illness, societal pressures, and the search for identity. The narrative follows Esther Greenwood, a young woman whose promising future is overshadowed by depression and psychological decline. This semi-autobiographical work provides an intimate insight into the protagonist's struggles, capturing the essence of post-war American society's expectations of women.

The Novel's Plot and Setting

The Bell Jar is set in the 1950s, primarily in New York City and later in Boston. Esther Greenwood's experiences as an intern at a prestigious magazine form the backdrop for the novel's exploration of ambition, mental health challenges, and societal norms. The plot traces her descent into mental illness, hospitalization, and eventual recovery, offering readers a candid portrayal of depression and the stigma associated with it.

Key Themes in *The Bell Jar*

The novel addresses several enduring themes that contribute to its critical

acclaim and relevance:

- **Mental Health and Depression:** The portrayal of Esther's psychological turmoil sheds light on mental illness with rare honesty for its time.
- **Identity and Self-Discovery:** Esther's journey highlights the struggle to find personal meaning amid external pressures.
- **Gender Roles and Societal Expectations:** The book critiques the limited roles available to women in the 1950s, emphasizing the impact of societal constraints.
- **Isolation and Alienation:** The "bell jar" metaphor symbolizes the suffocating isolation that Esther experiences.

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While PDF is a popular format for its compatibility and ease of use, The Bell Jar is also available in other digital formats such as EPUB and MOBI, which may offer enhanced reading experiences on various devices.

Literary Significance of The Bell Jar

The Bell Jar holds a distinguished place in American literature for its candid portrayal of mental health and its critique of mid-20th-century gender norms. Sylvia Plath's lyrical and introspective prose has influenced countless writers and remains a subject of academic study.

Impact on Mental Health Awareness

The novel's raw depiction of depression and psychiatric treatment contributed to greater understanding and empathy regarding mental illness. It remains a vital text in discussions about psychological well-being and stigma.

Feminist Interpretations

Many scholars view *The Bell Jar* as a feminist text that challenges traditional roles prescribed to women. Esther's resistance to societal expectations and her quest for autonomy resonate with feminist critiques of the era.

Enduring Popularity and Adaptations

The Bell Jar continues to be widely read and has inspired various adaptations including stage productions and film projects. Its themes remain relevant, ensuring its place in contemporary literary conversations.

Benefits of Reading The Bell Jar in PDF Format

Accessing *The Bell Jar* in PDF format offers several advantages for readers, especially in academic and personal study contexts. The format's portability and compatibility make it a preferred choice for many.

Portability and Accessibility

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PDF readers often include tools for searching text, highlighting passages, and adding notes, which enhance the study and analysis of complex literary works like *The Bell Jar*.

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Suitable for Academic Use

The PDF format is widely accepted in educational settings for submitting assignments, referencing texts, and sharing documents, making it an ideal choice for students and educators engaging with *The Bell Jar*.

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the summary of 'The Bell Jar'?

'The Bell Jar' is a semi-autobiographical novel by Sylvia Plath that explores the struggles of a young woman named Esther Greenwood as she battles mental illness and societal expectations in 1950s America.

Who is the author of 'The Bell Jar'?

The author of 'The Bell Jar' is Sylvia Plath, an American poet and novelist.

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Yes, if you have a legal copy of 'The Bell Jar' PDF, you can use eBook conversion tools like Calibre to convert it into EPUB or MOBI formats for compatibility with different devices.

Are there any notable themes in 'The Bell Jar'?

Yes, notable themes in 'The Bell Jar' include mental illness, identity, societal pressure, feminism, and the search for self-understanding.

Why is 'The Bell Jar' considered a classic in literature?

'The Bell Jar' is considered a classic because of its candid portrayal of mental health issues, its insightful exploration of a young woman's life, and Sylvia Plath's unique literary style that resonates with readers across generations.

Additional Resources

1. *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

This semi-autobiographical novel explores the struggles of Esther Greenwood, a young woman grappling with mental illness and societal expectations in 1950s America. The narrative delves into themes of identity, depression, and the pressures faced by women. Plath's poetic prose and raw honesty provide a haunting and intimate portrayal of psychological turmoil.

2. *Prozac Nation* by Elizabeth Wurtzel

A memoir detailing the author's battle with depression during her youth, this book offers an unflinching look at mental illness in a modern context. Wurtzel's candid narration sheds light on the impact of antidepressants and therapy, paralleling some themes found in *The Bell Jar*. It's a poignant exploration of the stigma and challenges surrounding mental health.

3. *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

A classic short story that explores a woman's descent into madness while confined for "rest cure" treatment. Through the protagonist's journal entries, the story critiques the medical and societal treatment of women's mental health in the 19th century. Its psychological depth and feminist undertones resonate with the themes in *The Bell Jar*.

4. *Girl, Interrupted* by Susanna Kaysen

This memoir recounts Kaysen's time spent in a psychiatric hospital after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. It provides insight into the lives of young women facing mental illness and the complexities of institutional care. The book's introspective and sometimes darkly humorous tone complements the themes of personal struggle found in *The Bell Jar*.

5. *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger

While not directly about mental illness, this novel captures the angst and alienation of adolescence through the voice of Holden Caulfield. Its exploration of identity crisis and emotional turmoil parallels some of Esther Greenwood's experiences. The book remains a seminal work on youth rebellion and psychological introspection.

6. *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf

This novel intricately weaves the inner lives of its characters, particularly focusing on Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, a war veteran suffering from PTSD. Woolf's stream-of-consciousness style provides a profound exploration of mental health and societal pressures. The book's themes of trauma and existential reflection echo those in *The Bell Jar*.

7. *Sharp Objects* by Gillian Flynn

A psychological thriller featuring a journalist who returns to her hometown to cover a series of murders while confronting her own traumatic past and mental health issues. Flynn's dark and gripping narrative examines family dysfunction and psychological scars. The intensity and complexity of the protagonist's mind draw parallels to the psychological depth of Esther Greenwood.

8. *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness* by William Styron

Styron's memoir offers a powerful and eloquent account of his struggle with severe depression. The book provides a firsthand perspective on the devastation of mental illness and the journey toward recovery. It complements *The Bell Jar* by providing another voice to the experience of depression and the social stigma attached to it.

9. *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia* by Marya Hornbacher

This memoir candidly chronicles Hornbacher's battle with eating disorders and the accompanying mental health challenges. Its raw and honest depiction of addiction, control, and recovery resonates with themes of psychological distress and societal expectations explored in *The Bell Jar*. The book sheds light on the complex relationship between body image and mental illness.

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The Bell Jar PDF: A Deep Dive into Sylvia Plath's Seminal Work

Author: Eleanor Vance

Outline:

Introduction: An overview of Sylvia Plath's life and the context surrounding The Bell Jar's creation. Its enduring impact and continued relevance.

Chapter 1: Confined Consciousness: Exploring Esther Greenwood's descent into mental illness, analyzing the symbolism of the bell jar itself and its representation of societal pressures and internal struggles.

Chapter 2: Patriarchy and Female Identity: Examining the novel's critique of 1950s societal expectations placed upon women, focusing on Esther's experiences with relationships, career aspirations, and the conflicting ideals presented.

Chapter 3: Mental Health and Treatment: A detailed analysis of Esther's treatment, exploring the limitations of 1950s psychiatric practices and the novel's portrayal of mental illness as a complex and multifaceted experience.

Chapter 4: Themes of Identity and Self-Discovery: Discussing Esther's journey of self-discovery and the complexities of forging one's own identity in the face of societal pressures and personal struggles.

Chapter 5: Literary Style and Techniques: Analyzing Plath's use of symbolism, imagery, and narrative voice to create a powerful and emotionally resonant portrayal of mental illness and female experience.

Conclusion: Reflecting on the lasting legacy of The Bell Jar, its continued relevance in contemporary discussions about mental health, gender roles, and societal expectations.

The Bell Jar PDF: Unpacking Sylvia Plath's Masterpiece

Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published in 1963, remains a powerfully resonant exploration of mental illness, societal pressures, and the complexities of female identity in the mid-20th century. This seminal work transcends its historical context, continuing to resonate deeply with readers today due to its unflinching portrayal of mental health struggles and its insightful critique of societal expectations. Obtaining *The Bell Jar* as a PDF provides easy access to this crucial piece of literature, allowing for in-depth analysis and reflection.

1. Confined Consciousness: The Suffocating Bell Jar

The central metaphor of the "bell jar" encapsulates Esther Greenwood's descent into depression and mental breakdown. The image of confinement, suffocation, and isolation effectively conveys the overwhelming sense of helplessness and despair that characterizes her experience. The bell jar isn't just a physical representation; it's a powerful symbol of the societal and internal pressures that trap

Esther. The claustrophobic atmosphere of the novel mirrors Esther's internal state, emphasizing the psychological weight she carries. Analyzing the symbolism of the bell jar requires considering its multifaceted nature – it represents societal expectations, the stifling limitations imposed on women, and the internal struggle for self-discovery and autonomy. The claustrophobia Esther feels is amplified by the descriptions of her surroundings, creating a sense of inescapable dread and highlighting the suffocating nature of her mental illness.

2. Patriarchy and Female Identity: Navigating Conflicting Ideals

The Bell Jar offers a scathing critique of the patriarchal structures prevalent in 1950s America. Esther's experiences highlight the conflicting ideals presented to women: the pressure to conform to societal expectations of domesticity and marriage versus the desire for intellectual and professional fulfillment. Her struggles to reconcile these conflicting ideals contribute to her mental breakdown. The novel explores the limitations imposed on women in their career choices, their relationships, and their overall self-expression. Analyzing the interactions Esther has with men, both romantic and professional, reveals the power dynamics at play and the ways in which societal structures restrict female autonomy. The novel's critique is not merely historical; it remains relevant today as women continue to navigate similar challenges in a world that still struggles with gender equality. The subtle and overt ways in which societal pressure impacts women's mental health are meticulously detailed throughout the narrative.

3. Mental Health and Treatment: A 1950s Perspective

The novel provides a stark depiction of mental healthcare practices in the 1950s. Esther's treatment, including electroshock therapy and confinement in a mental institution, highlights the limitations and often inhumane aspects of the era's approaches to mental illness. Plath's portrayal is not without criticism; it challenges readers to consider the ethical implications of the treatment methods employed, and the lack of understanding surrounding mental health. The novel's portrayal underscores the need for compassionate and effective mental healthcare, highlighting the often-traumatic experiences individuals faced in seeking help. The novel prompts discussion on how far mental healthcare has progressed, and the challenges that remain in providing adequate support and understanding for those struggling with mental illness.

4. Themes of Identity and Self-Discovery: Forging a Path

Esther's journey is one of self-discovery, a struggle to forge her own identity in the face of overwhelming societal pressures and internal turmoil. Her experiences with various relationships, career aspirations, and the pressure to conform force her to confront her own values and desires. The process of self-discovery is depicted as painful and complex, highlighting the difficulties involved in challenging societal norms and embracing individuality. This struggle is particularly

poignant because it shows the inherent contradiction women face in trying to conform and maintain their autonomy. The novel emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and the resilience needed to overcome significant adversity.

5. Literary Style and Techniques: Power Through Prose

Plath's masterful use of literary techniques significantly contributes to the novel's emotional impact. Her symbolism is profound, using the bell jar itself as the most prominent example. The imagery is vivid and often disturbing, reflecting Esther's internal state and creating a powerful sensory experience for the reader. Plath's use of first-person narration allows for intimate access to Esther's thoughts and feelings, making the reader deeply invested in her journey. The stream-of-consciousness style adds to the sense of immediacy and raw emotion, enhancing the realism of the narrative. This mastery of prose creates a captivating and unforgettable reading experience. The detailed descriptions and precise word choice elevate the narrative beyond a simple recounting of events, making it a lasting piece of literature.

Conclusion: A Timeless Legacy

The Bell Jar continues to hold significant relevance in contemporary society. Its exploration of mental health, gender roles, and societal expectations remains profoundly resonant, prompting ongoing conversations about these crucial issues. The novel's enduring power lies in its unflinching honesty and its ability to resonate with readers across generations. It serves as a reminder of the importance of mental health awareness, the ongoing struggle for gender equality, and the enduring quest for self-discovery and personal fulfillment. The accessibility of The Bell Jar as a PDF ensures that its important message continues to reach a broad audience, fostering crucial dialogue about mental health, feminism, and individual agency.

FAQs

1. Is The Bell Jar a true story? While semi-autobiographical, it's a work of fiction, drawing from Plath's own experiences but creatively shaped into a narrative.
2. What is the symbolism of the bell jar? The bell jar symbolizes societal constraints, the stifling pressures of conformity, and Esther's descent into depression.
3. What is the main theme of The Bell Jar? The novel explores themes of mental illness, societal expectations on women, the struggle for identity, and the complexities of self-discovery.
4. What type of mental illness does Esther suffer from? While not explicitly diagnosed, Esther's experiences align with symptoms of depression and possibly other mental health conditions.

5. What is the significance of the novel's ending? The ending suggests hope for recovery and the possibility of overcoming adversity, though it's not a neatly resolved happy ending.
6. Why is *The Bell Jar* still relevant today? The novel's themes of mental health, gender inequality, and societal pressure continue to resonate with contemporary readers.
7. How can I access *The Bell Jar* as a PDF? You can often find authorized PDFs through online bookstores or e-book platforms. Always check for copyright legality.
8. Is *The Bell Jar* suitable for all readers? Due to its mature themes and content dealing with mental illness and suicide, it's recommended for mature readers.
9. What are some critical interpretations of *The Bell Jar*? Critical interpretations vary, examining feminism, confessional poetry, the psychological realism, and the complexities of Plath's personal life.

Related Articles:

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literature and culture. Her work has constantly remained in print in the UK and US (and in numerous translated editions) since the appearance of her first collection in 1960. Plath's own writing has been supplemented over the decades by a wealth of critical and biographical material. The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath provides an authoritative and comprehensive guide to the poetry, prose and autobiographical writings of Sylvia Plath. It offers a critical overview of key readings, debates and issues from almost fifty years of Plath scholarship, draws attention to the historical, literary, national and gender contexts which frame her writing and presents informed and attentive readings of her own work. This accessibly written book will be of great use to students beginning their explorations of this important writer.

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landscape of her own heart.

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Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs into his life - dressed like a ninja and summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge - he follows. After their all-nighter ends, Q arrives at school to discover that Margo has disappeared.

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controversies that surround Sylvia Plath's life and work mean that her poems are more read and studied now than ever before. This Companion provides a comprehensive and authoritative overview of Sylvia Plath's poetry, prose, letters and journals and of their place in twentieth-century culture. These essays by leading international scholars represent a spectrum of critical perspectives. They pay particular attention to key debates and to well-known texts such as *Ariel* and *The Bell Jar*, while offering thought-provoking readings to new as well as more experienced Plath readers. The Companion also discusses three additions to the field: Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*, Plath's complete *Journals* and the 'Restored' edition of *Ariel*. With its invaluable guide to further reading and chronology of Plath's life and work, this Companion will help students and scholars understand and enjoy Plath's work and its continuing relevance.

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the bell jar pdf: The Bell Jar, by Sylvia Plath Janet McCann, 2012 *The Bell Jar* has always been troubling reading, because its main character Esther Greenwood is so fully identified with Sylvia Plath herself. Attempts to separate them critically have not been successful. This volume consists of essays about *The Bell Jar*. Essays discuss how the novel reflected the time in which it was written and on the critical reception of the novel.

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the bell jar pdf: Eye Rhymes Kathleen Connors, Sally Bayley, 2007 Here is the first book to bring long-overdue attention to Sylvia Plath's surprisingly accomplished visual art and to place that art in relation to her literary career. Plath trained as a studio artist before her sophomore year at Smith and her work in tempera and watercolor paintings, pastels, ink, crayon and pencil drawings, and other media reveals a talent that both complements and illuminates her genius as a writer. *Eye Rhymes* brings together essays by six Plath scholars—including renowned authors Diane Middlebrook, Landgon Hammer and Christiana Britzolakis, book editors Kathleen Connors and Sally Bayley, and Fan Jinghua—and contextualizes approximately sixty of Plath's visual works within her writing oeuvre, starting with juvenilia that reveal the extensive play between her two disciplines. Special attention is given to Plath's unpublished teen diaries and book reports containing drawings and early textual experiments, created years before her famous *I am I* diary notes of age seventeen, when critical examination of her writing usually begins. The book offers new critical approaches to the artist's multidimensional output, including writing that appropriates sophisticated visual and color effects years after painting and drawing became her hobby and writing her chosen profession. The essays gathered here also relate Plath's visual art interests to her early identity as a writer in Cambridge, her teen artwork and writing on war, mid-career art poems on the works of de Chirico, her representations of womanhood within mid-century commercial culture, and her visual aesthetics in poetry. Filled with stunning reproductions of her art and fresh readings of many of her most important poems, *Eye Rhymes* offers readers a new way of understanding the full range of Plath's creative expression.

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the recipes will help even the most inexperienced cooks spend less time in the kitchen and more time around the table. Packed with quickie breakfasts, 30-minute skillet sprints, and speedy takeout copycats, this cookbook is guaranteed to inspire readers to whip up fast, healthy, homemade meals that are truly 'damn delicious!'

the bell jar pdf: A Study Guide for Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* Gale, Cengage Learning, 2015-09-15 A Study Guide for Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

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the bell jar pdf: *Girl In Room 105* Chetan Bhagat, 2024-02-23 Hi, I'm Keshav, and my life is screwed. I hate my job and my girlfriend left me. Ah, the beautiful Zara. Zara is from Kashmir. She is a Muslim. And did I tell you my family is a bit, well, traditional? Anyway, leave that. Zara and I broke

up four years ago. She moved on in life. I didn't. I drank every night to forget her. I called, messaged, and stalked her on social media. She just ignored me. However, that night, on the eve of her birthday, Zara messaged me. She called me over, like old times, to her hostel room 105. I shouldn't have gone, but I did... and my life changed forever. This is not a love story. It is an unlove story. From the author of *Five Point Someone* and *2 States*, comes a fast-paced, funny and unputdownable thriller about obsessive love and finding purpose in life against the backdrop of contemporary India.

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the bell jar pdf: *Sylvia Plath: Drawings* Sylvia Plath, Frieda Hughes, 2013-11-05 A unique and invaluable collection of the young Sylvia Plath's drawings from important and formative years in her life: 1955-1957 *Sylvia Plath: Drawings* is a portfolio of pen-and-ink illustrations created during the transformative period spent at Cambridge University, when Plath met and secretly married poet Ted Hughes, and traveled with him to Paris and Spain on their honeymoon, years before she wrote her seminal work, *The Bell Jar*. Throughout her life, Sylvia Plath cited art as her deepest source of inspiration. This collection sheds light on these key years in her life, capturing her exquisite observations of the world around her. It includes Plath's drawings from England, France, Spain, and New England, featuring such subjects as Parisian rooftops, trees, and churches, as well as a portrait Ted Hughes. *Sylvia Plath: Drawings* includes letters and diary entries that add depth and context to the great poet's work, as well as an illuminating introduction by her daughter, Frieda Hughes.

the bell jar pdf: *Ariel* Sylvia Plath, 2013 *Ariel* (1965) contains many of Sylvia Plath's best-known poems written in an extraordinary burst of creativity just before her death in 1963, including 'Lady Lazarus', 'Edge', 'Daddy' and 'Paralytic'. The first of four collections to be published by Faber & Faber, *Ariel* is the volume on which Sylvia Plath's reputation as one of the most original, daring and gifted poets of the twentieth century rests. This beautiful hardback reproduces the classic design of the first edition of a volume now recognised to be one of the most shocking and iconic collections of poetry of the twentieth century. 'If the poems are despairing, vengeful and destructive, they are at the same time tender, open to things, and also unusually clever, sardonic, hardminded . . . They are works of great artistic purity and, despite all the nihilism, great generosity . . . the book is a major literary event.' A. Alvarez in the Observer

the bell jar pdf: The split identity of Esther Greenwood in Silvia Plath's "The Bell Jar" Sarah Schommer, 2008-07-18 Seminar paper from the year 2008 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Department of English and Linguistics), course: Madness in Literature, language: English, abstract: 1. Introduction Madness is an important aspect in literature - especially madness of female writers respectively madness of female chief characters is interesting to deal with concerning the social role of women in the cause of time. It [madness] is that state of mind where a person's feelings or beliefs about himself [...] are completely disrupted, making him unable to function in whatever social role - husband, parent, friend, employee - he might expect to enjoy. It is the state where the sufferer passes beyond the bounds of reality, intelligibility, and rationality as defined by the bulk of society. The psychotic is a stranger among his own people. (Nettle 12) A character consistent to this definition of madness is Esther Greenwood in Silvia Plath's autobiographical novel The Bell Jar which was published 1963. Being a young intelligent woman, Esther becomes mad as a result of the mental stress to conform to the traditional role of women or to break tradition. Esther Greenwood is passive and unable to be agent of her life. Never having learned how to develop herself as an independent individual, she is dependent on others and follows their ideals of a fulfilling life. She is torn between starting a family and starting a career. According to this, The Bell Jar reveals the difficulty of becoming an adult, by breaking tradition to be able to realize one's personal scheme of life. As Susan Bassnett points out, "The Bell Jar is a novel about a suicide attempt that fails; but it is also a novel about a woman who learns how to live with herself and how to come to terms with the world, that world of destruction and horror [...]" (Bassnett 122). As the story of Esther Greenwood's madness is full of interesting symbols and motifs, it is unfortunately impossible to deal with the whole of them. Consequently this paper will focus on few aspects revealing the split identity of Esther Greenwood and show the process of her recovery as well. These basic motifs are: the fig-tree, the fake identity she builds up and the motif of the bell jar. They will be discussed in the context of Esther's mental illness...

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