



# Deadly Closets: The Fiction of Charles Jackson

*Mark Connelly*

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Charles Jackson (1903-1968) is best known for his novel, *The Lost Weekend*. Published less than a decade after the founding of AA, the novel's intense psychological portrait of an alcoholic captivated both the public and critics. But Jackson's success was short-lived. His second novel probed a subject far more daring than chemical dependency. In 1946 he published *The Fall of Valor*, a novel about a married professor's homosexual attachment to a young Marine captain. The critics who applauded his frank approach to alcoholism were disturbed that he would write about a subject many deemed unsuitable for fiction. This book examines the life and fiction of Charles Jackson, a pioneer gay writer who addressed taboo issues with insight and sensitivity. The closets of addiction, repressed sexuality, and violence he explored were not merely "untidy" but deadly. His stories about "outing," gay-bashing, molestation, thrill killers, and media sensationalism are more relevant today than when they appeared fifty years ago.

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