

# Good example of the lottery and the one who walk away from omelas essay

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The two narratives, *The Lottery* and *The One Who Walk Away from Omelas* take us through the stories of two villages each with unique traditions that involve human sacrifice. These are rituals that have been blindly followed by the villagers, who even though understand why, are compelled to follow them. It appears as if people they never met, as they died long ago, designed the rules, which the villagers have to adopt and follow. Such traditions were passed onto them, and since those who understand their original meaning are not alive to witness, the suffering for them to undo them, the villagers have no alternative, but to heed to them. The two stories clearly bring out the theme of totalitarianism, which we shall be discussing in this paper.

Freedom is a term that has been described as having a free will do and act in a particular way as long as it is not hurting those around. This has also been described different especially by nations that have gone through colonial rule and desire to be set free from such rules. There is also the aspect of culture that has continued to hit headlines. The cruelty that culture exposes people to yet those who have the ability to help them remain helpless. This is because of the cultural ties that dictate the observance of such rituals. Even though a group of individuals gets hurt in the process, it is ultimately accepted as normal even as the people pride themselves in having maintained their culture.

In *The Lottery*, the villagers have a ritual that has been running on through the years to have a person stoned to death. We have not been told of a specific reason why people have to engage in such a selfish action but just to keep a tradition. It is clear from the story that every village member is

comfortable with the ritual until when they become the specific victim of the same. For instance, we are told of a character, Tessie who has been participating in the ritual for years but is uncomfortable with the results when it is her turn to face the cruel death. Her efforts to try to run away from the wrath of the villagers who are ready to fulfil a custom are ignored. We also experience a similar scenario in the One Who Walk Away from Omelas. We are introduced to a beautiful city that shines with joy and happiness yet behind such beauty; there is an ugly ritual that has to be maintained. The beautiful city is blinded to the suffering of an innocent child whom they believe has to go through the ordeal just to ensure the city continues to shine in beauty and prosperity. There is also an understanding that regularly, a person has to go away from the village to the unknown destiny, never to return. Despite the concerns that have been raised, especially about a child who has to live in seclusion and suffering, nobody has the guts to help or deliver the child as it is a ritual that has been observed over the ages. The only alternative they have is to walk away from such customs to unknown destinations.

Comparing the two stories, we notice a selfish trend in the communities whereby people are sacrificing their own for a tradition they never quite understand. From the narration, the people are bound by rules that they do not understand their origin or meaning. The simple belief they have that maintaining such traditions will keep them from falling from what their ancestors followed keeps them glued. There are quite a number of people from the communities who do not agree with the rituals, yet all they can do is to simply sympathise with the situation and move on with their lives, “

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced with terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more". (Le Guin 256). It is unfortunate that they ignore the pain and anguish they cause to the victims and their families and instead choose to be controlled by a past they do not understand.

The above stories may be looked at as if they only happen in certain communities and that modern culture has nothing to do with it. For instance, the case of One Who Walk Away from Omelas could be a community secret or even a secret that is known to only a few individuals. Many from the city could be enjoying and even admiring the beauty and the prosperity without the ugly rituals behind it. Since they could not do away with such a culture, they were left with only two alternatives, to either live up to the tradition or simply walk away from the community. In the stories, we observe some characters that make various decisions just to counter the backward lifestyles. Many, even though did not have a specific reasons as to how such an ugly secrets promotes their prosperity, but since they carried it forward from their ancestors, they hold on to it without knowledge.

The One who walks away for Omelas tells us of people who frequently walk out from the beautiful community after some premeditation. Most young people who saw the sufferings that the young child was going through could not overcome the anguish within them. It disturbs them even the more at the painful revelation that such an innocent child has to stay in such isolation

and deprivation just to ensure the city maintains its success. This are the same characters who decide to walk away from the beautiful city to unknown destination just to ensure they are not part of such sacrifices. Despite the beauty, that grace the land, being aware of the human sacrifices made makes them quite uncomfortable to stay there and look for refuge elsewhere.

Fear is one of the leading factors in the two stories, which make people to hold on to the beliefs. For instance, in *The Lottery*, people mainly keep the ritual of innocently killing one of their own because they fear backsliding from their traditions. This implies that they do not understand why they engage in the acts neither is there a reward for them same but just to maintain what they found their ancestors following. On the other hand, in the *One Who Walk Away from Omelas*, the community is afraid of what may become of the city if they have to lose the suffering child. They believe that their happiness and prosperity rely on the suffering of that child and that if they do not retain it, then the city will be poor. The fear on unknown happenings makes most people hold on to unknown traditions just to have inner peace.

Totalitarianism involves making some few individuals suffer for the safety and security of a larger community. Nobody may understand the powers that rule a land until when it is dug deep into a history and realise that their lives are planted on human sacrifices. Once people come to such a revelation, they make decisions for themselves. There is usually a need to evolve from such cultural practices by walking away from them to evade the guilty and even the possibility of having to succumb to similar treatment.

## **Works cited**

Jackson, Shirley. *The Lottery and Other Stories*. Penguin UK, 2009.

Le Guin, Ursula K. "The ones who walk away from Omelas." *The Wind's Twelve Quarters* (1975): 275-84.