

# The lottery by shirley jackson analysis

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Shirley Jackson is a master of suspense. She starts the story *The Lottery* off by describing what seems to be a normal summer's day in an average village. This gives the reader a false sense of security which quickly turns into a sense of horror by the end of the story. Jackson uses the elements of a short story, atmosphere, plot and characters to create a sense of horror.

One of the five elements of a short story that Jackson uses to create a sense of horror is atmosphere.

Jackson describes the story as taking place on a clear, warm and sunny summer day but when one first reads about the children in the story, they are not playing and having fun and one would expect, instead they are quietly grouped together not doing much of anything. The fact that these children, more specifically the boys, are acting uneasy, and loafing around on beautiful summer day is one of the ways that Jackson uses atmosphere to create a sense of horror. Another one of the elements that Jackson uses to create a sense of horror is plot.

When Tessie Hutchinson finds out that her husband and head of the family, Bill, has drawn the marked piece of paper she starts shouting out that “ You didn’t give him time enough to take any paper her wanted. I saw you. It wasn’t fair!” so everyone should have to draw again, it is starting to become clear that being the winner of this lottery is not a good thing. This is made even clearer when Tessie starts trying to have her in-laws added to the roster of the next group of contestants in order to better her chances of not being picked. Characters are the third and final element of a short story that

Jackson uses to create a sense of horror. One of ways that Jackson use characters to create a sense of horror is through their names.

An example of one of the characters she uses to do this is Mr. Graves. Grave can be used as an adjective or noun. The adjective means to cause alarm or to be serious. The noun refers to a burial place, typically a hole in the ground. Black is a color commonly associated with bad, mysterious and dark things, death being one of those things. When Mr. Graves makes his appearance he is bringing in the black box. The fact that a man called Mr. Graves is walking in with a black box, the author is letting the reader know that something bad is going to happen. This is one example of how Jackson uses the characters to create a sense of horror.

Shirley Jackson tells a suspenseful story about a group of average people in an average village. She uses atmosphere, plot and characters, three of the five elements of a short story to create a horrific story which shows the reader how what we think to be normal customs and rituals can actually turn out to be horrific and barbaric if one takes a step back and judges them from a different perspective.