

The lottery by jackson

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



The Lottery by Jackson

'The Lottery' by Jackson describes how people's blind adherence to traditions or even law can be disastrous as this adherence, at times, results in the torture of the innocent and also how everyone in a society is equally vulnerable to the ill effects of such foolishness. In order to present this theme, the story certainly uses foreshadowing, setting, and symbols.

In order to show that something unpleasant is in the pipeline, the story reveals in the first paragraph itself that the said lottery is not normal. It is stated that "some towns ...took two days and had to be started on June 26th but in this village, the whole lottery took less than two hours" (Jackson, 5). Though this does not show that something dangerous is going to take place, it is a sufficient clue to show that something abnormal is to take place.

Thereafter, one meets the young people collecting rocks. Again, Jackson makes sure that the foreshadowing is not sufficient for the reader to do away with the suspense. So, she makes the young ones collect only 'smooth' stones (5).

As the story progresses, one gets the idea that something not so good is in the pipeline as Tessie argues that there should be another lottery as there are many members in her family. She is vehemently trying to save her husband by saying 'it was not fair'. The reader becomes more aware of the impending danger despite the puzzles created by Jackson at this stage (11). Admittedly, the story uses various symbols to show how the society loves to stick to the tradition without giving it a second thought. The first symbol is the Black Box. The black box survives as the symbol of people's loyalty

towards tradition. After years and years of tear and wear, the box is almost totally worn out but “ no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box” (7). The black box has its importance in the society on the basis of some myths as the lottery has.

The second important symbol is the lottery. This can be defined as any tradition, value or belief that is passed from one generation to another generation without any rational grounds. It is not only the generators and promoters of such traditions who fall prey to the ill effects but the innocent ones too are chosen at random. Admittedly, the lottery is the symbol of all the social and religious restrictions that mar the lives of all people on the reason that they too exist in the same society.

Admittedly, Jackson has taken utmost care in selecting a suitable setting for the story. The story has selected a calm and relaxed beginning with a ‘ clear and sunny’ summer day morning in a rural community (5). Everyone is in a holiday mood and children wander around collecting stones. However, as the black box appears, one gets hints of change as the box represents orthodoxy that is utterly irrational. Even when the victim is selected, the request is to “ be a good sport” (12). Thus, by selecting a calmer setting to depict a gruesome murder based on tradition, the feeling of uneasiness felt by the reader for the apparent lack of emotion and lack of rationality is heightened.

Works Cited

Jackson, Shirley. *The Lottery*. The Creative Company, 2008. Print.