

The themes of the lottery and the rocking horse winner

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The Themes of The Lottery and The Rocking Horse Winner In D. H.

Lawrence's The Rocking-Horse Winner and the Shirley Jackson's The Lottery are different stories about different topics but have a similar ending. Each story teaches a lesson. If everyone were to sit down and read both of these short stories in a critical manner people's lives would be changed for the better. The Lottery is a short story, third-person, objective. In short the citizens of this New England village gather at 10: 00 AM on June 27 in the town square where the surrounding gives us a sense of a nonchalant attitude with children playing and adults chatting. Mr. Summers arrives with the black wooden box. He calls each family and the person chosen for that family goes to the front to draw a folded paper out of the box. When everyone is called and has their paper then everyone can open the paper. The picker with the black dot then takes their family and each family member chooses a paper out of the box. Again when each has their slip of paper the papers one opens it. The person with the black dot on their paper wins the Lottery. The irony comes when the lottery winner gets their prize of being stoned to death. This short story has at least two different themes associated with it. The first theme is the fact that people are reluctant to disband tradition. Most people don't want to change from tradition because of change being scary. This has been seen thought out time. In 1776 we used this theme in order to keep with slavery. Then again in 1960's it is used to allow racial segregation. It was used until 1919 to inhibit women from voting. This theme is not something that has just come about, it is has been part of our history longer than we can remember. Some people say another theme that can be found with in this short story is how " society wrongfully designates scapegoats to

bear the sins of the community, " (The Lottery, 2012). This sacrificial offering has been used even in biblical times. One example of this is sacrificing a goat. We can also see this in the Mayan rituals where they would offer up a human sacrifice to appease their Gods by quickly removing the person heart. The Aztecs used this philosophy also. The Bible tells everyone is to redeem their own sins thought Jesus Christ that it is each person's responsibility. The Lottery on the other hand choses one person to redeem the town's sins for that year. This is why the lottery has to be drawn every year. The Rocking Horse Winner is an omniscient third-person point of view which gives the author the ability to give the character's thoughts within the story. The story takes place in England a few years after the First World War. It starts by describing a woman of great beauty that has no luck. It then goes to explain the living situation that caused Paul to acquire his obsession to save his mother. Paul goes behind his mother's back and gets involved with horse races. He would place large bets on horses that he knows will win and smaller one when he was not sure. After some time his mother starts getting worried that something is going on with Paul and she becomes uneasy. She goes home to find her son in a trance riding his rocking horse. He gets the name of the horse that will win the upcoming race and winds up winning a lot of money to save his family from debt and in turn losing his life. In The Rocking Horse Winner we can find many different types of themes.

Obsession is just one of the themes that can be found in this short story. The obsession of Paul to save his family from financial problems and there is also the obsession of the parents to live this rich lifestyle that they are accustomed to. All three characters have a lust for money. Paul acquired the

lust for money because of his mother's desires. He believed, after talking to his mother, that his father and mother were not lucky. So when he found that he was lucky because of the money he received from his uncle he became determined to help out his family. The corrupt sense of values is another theme that is found. This is demonstrated in the way the parents live. They live above their means with the nice house, servants, the attendance of plays, and the care of the children by a nurse. The mother is showing that outward appearance toward others is more important than anything else. People see the mother as a loving and devoted mother, but in reality she is just putting on a show because she is not able to love them. Others see the family as wealthy, but in reality they are living with multitude of debt where money is very hard to come by. This is portrayed in the house's repeating whispers of " There must be more money. " Looking back at The Lottery on the people's reluctance to change from tradition can also be seen in a way of an obsession. Though it is not quite like the theme in The Rocking Horse Winner they are similar in nature. In The Lottery people want to stay with tradition because that is what they know and the lottery has gone on from year to year. The lottery is a norm for this town just like wealthy living is the norm for The Rocking Horse Winner. They are situations that each are used to. Like when Old Man Warner said that, "There's always been a lottery." This just shows that no matter what people think it is tradition to keep on. The contrast occurs when most of the characters of The Lottery are starting to question even having the lottery. They are getting to the point that they want to change the tradition and stop the lottery all together, but the mother and father of Paul in The Rocking Horse Winner

never stop to think of being able to live another life style as what they have. Two other themes that can be compared and contrasted is society's ability to pin sin on another in The Lottery with the corrupt sense of values from The Rocking Horse Winner. In essence both of these themes contrast more so than they are similar. The similarity comes from the ability to cast false assumptions on another. The mother in The Rocking Horse Winner does this to everyone out side of her family by showing that they have wealth and that she dearly loves her children. When in reality they have no wealth and she is not able to love her children because she feels that they were thrust upon her. The Lottery cast false assumptions by thinking that one person can die in order to save the rest from sin which has been cast upon the town's people by their ancient ancestors. In contrast these two themes differ in the fact that the mother has chosen to give this persona about her family where the town's people of The lottery have inherited this belief. Each story has its own story and means but each story also holds an important lesson for anyone who reads them. If people where to take the time to understand the meanings behind the stories they would find that it is important to question what others ask of another. Do not take what one says blindly because that can lead one astray from how thing are supposed to be. People should question others action and requests if they don't feel that the request would be a wise thing to do. Each theme gives unique meanings and each theme will teach a lesson. It is up to the individual readers to understand and adhere to the lesson so that they will not make the same mistakes as others have.