

A character analysis of old man warner in shirley jackson's the lottery

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



The personality of Old Man Warner is constructed over the community's unwillingness to abandon traditions at all costs. Shirley Jackson portrays Old Man Warner as an individual who has traditions instilled in him to a fault. Throughout the story, Old Man Warner is constantly at odds with the younger community members who start questioning the point of such a lottery. Jackson reveals through Old Man Warner's personality that he is deeply traditional, resistant to change and is at times illogical and/or delusional.

Jackson's description of the setting in "The Lottery" shows a town that relies heavily on the custom of having a yearly lottery. The quote: "black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town" (Jackson 391) shows that Old Man Warner has been raised into believing that the lottery has a significant role in society. The town still does the same box it has and is reluctant to change the box in fear of upsetting anyone. A prime example of this is: "Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new box, however, nobody wanted to upset tradition as was represented by the black box" (Jackson 391). This again shows how the past has affected the town's beliefs, consequently having a major impact on Old Man Warner's personality.

Another personality trait of Old Man Warner is that he is illogical and/or delusional at times. Jackson shows this with Old Man Warner's responses to the younger villagers wanting to abandon the lottery. A quote that demonstrates is when "Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, that over in the north village they're talking of giving up the lottery" (Jackson 393). An equally important quote is also, Old Man Warner's

response " pack of crazy fools" (Jackson 393). This shows his inability to function rationally and reveals how deeply rooted not only Old Man Warner is but the entire community. Another piece of strong evidence suggests Old Man Warner was delusional is his full belief that the lottery had a direct effect on the villager's lives.

Additionally, Jackson shows how in-depth Old Man Warner's reliance on old deeply rooted traditions is to a fault. Jackson demonstrates this by displaying his fears of abandoning the lottery. Jackson shows extensively that Old Man Warner is afraid of change by the quotes he makes in " The Lottery". An excellent example of his fear of change is the quote: " There has always been a lottery" (Jackson 393). Another equally important example is his quote: " The lottery in June, corn be heavy soon" (Jackson 393). The author demonstrated by Old Man Warner that a community is so enthralled with traditions that they refuse to change regardless of logic and or reason.

Jackson with the setting of the story was able to demonstrate not only how Old Man Warner was, but how the older community in the village was. The village had a common theme of fear of change and a community stuck in the past. The quotes from Old Man Warner indicate that he is stuck in an illogical past where he is resistant to change regardless of the outcomes. Jackson demonstrated the personality of Old Man Warner in an exceptional way. " The Lottery" is an exciting work of literature overall, with deep undertones.