

Symbolism in the lottery by shirley jackson

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



Shirley Jackson's, "The Lottery," is saturated with the use of symbolism. Symbolism is practiced to represent something else. It helps construct significance and feeling in a story by causing the reader to make connections between the piece of literature and the real world. Sometimes it can be very difficult to find the fundamental connotation that the author is trying to get across. Symbols can be very unmistakable or cruelly conceptual which makes the audience stretch the horizon of their minds. Each icon that is identified in, "The Lottery," can be interpreted as standing for several different things. Correspondingly, there are at least three different categories of symbols used by Jackson in this story alone.

Taking the lottery itself as an illustration, there is a minimum two distinctive viewpoints that can be represented by this one object. First, it could carry the notion of governmental corruption. Inside this story, the lottery is articulately premeditated. There are guidelines and expectancies that must be obeyed at all cost, just like we uncover in the government currently. Each day, week, and year Americans are forced to complete, vote for, and undertake duties that go against their core beliefs for the sake of the government and its officials. Afraid to push against the status quo, more and more laws and regulations are being formed that are, in turn, corrupting the nation. This is correlated to the theme of being forced into doing heinous things because higher authorities make it to where you are required to implement them. Immediately this could be taken into relation with the film, *The Purge*. Mass anarchy is spread over the entire country because crime was made legal. Who said this was okay? Only the government executives but they were offered protection just like Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves were

in the story. They had power within their community and did not have to partake; they were granted immunity! Not one person, despite their phony façade, would elect to participate in the lottery under normal circumstances. However, because these people were involuntarily pushed into supporting this occasion, they formed a mental barrier that primed themselves into considering it acceptable and ordinary to exercise this manner of torment. The higher ups were looking out for their best interests, right? They had been brainwashed! It became clear that one could break this barricade down by placing one in danger. When Mrs. Hutchinson was confronted with hazard, she immediately began to blame other people, and she renounced the lottery all together. Her husband's response was for her to be silent. He continued to go through the motions because it was what had to be done. The administration told him he had to, so he, without hesitation, did his part even when the going got rough.

The next item that could be traced back to being symbolized by the lottery is community traditions. Individuals that inhabit this village become unseeing to the wicked ritual that is taking place right under their noses. When the annual date of the lottery rolls around, the people numbly take part because of what is expected of them and what they are used to. No reaction, contemplation, emotion, etc. is exhibited by these people. They modestly pause their day-to-day lives to heed the lottery's wrath. Do they not see the evil in their actions? How could one become accustomed to such a horrible thing? One would reason that this would be customary to only this settlement; however, the lottery is happening in villages all around them. Some even take up for the ceremonious custom by testifying that nearby

places, which have exonerated the incident, were imprudent to do so. Eventually, one man justifies the event by stating, " There's always been a lottery." Just because something has always taken place makes it right? Why will someone not stand up for what they know is right? Over time is wrong made right? " Everyone is doing it, so we cannot be left out or seem different," one can almost hear them whisper. It is what is familiar; it is what has come to be anticipated. One is required to weigh the morals of the traditions that we follow whilst analyzing Jackson's work. Linked to this notion is the theme of blindly following tradition. Did the people even know why they were taking part in the lottery? There was even a reference made by a character that led you to believe that they did not know where, when, or why the lottery had begun. Still, no-one called this suspicious act into question! There is no motivation that the lottery should even be still in practice. They continue to have it because they have always had it. It seems that the lottery forms the foundations of this town. This becomes their justification for their actions. They do not want to be in the wrong, so they do not question motives and blame it all on tradition.

These two views of symbolism are both connected to the use of symbolism from an object in the story. Many more times, Jackson uses objects to connect themes and express feelings about her story's contexts. Matters like this include things such as the black box. These artifacts from the story are meticulously established to contribute to the themes of the story. They all are united to a section in the world that makes the reader form conclusions, questions, and associations. The black box epitomizes corrupt laws of the land and the misrepresented relationship the people have with them. The

color brings a threatening mood to the reader. Upon evaluation of the situation, one can build the realization that the town's destiny lies in the box. The slips of paper that reveal the fate of someone resides in it. If the lottery is the government, then the box has to be the decrees. It is a rule of the lottery, and a tradition of it, that this box is used. Just how the government puts regulations in place to meet their agendas, the box is used to carry out the agenda of the lottery. Without the box, a controlling, regulated sense would not be recognized. If the lottery is the traditions, then the box would denote the values of the people. It is mentioned within the story that the box was becoming withered. With each year that passes, the box has more and more splinters. This is connected to the fact that people's values were becoming "splintered" for the sake of the lottery. Every year that goes by, the people are allowing more perversion to enter into their lives.

Not only can you use objects as symbols, but you can also effectively contribute to a piece by using characters as similar tools. The characters of the Delacroix family, for example, denote the church. Their name, literally, means of the cross which brings thoughts of religion into the mix of Jackson's writing. Appearing over and over again, this family is a friend to all, so it seems. They are kneaded together with the rest of the community, yet they follow the traditions and customs made by the officials even when their friends are put at risk. "Are they true friends?" one might ask. This leads to the connection that the church can be imaged as a positivity occupied haven for the community but can become damaging due to external immorality. In this case, the corruption was disguised as a tradition. Ironic, owed to the

element that traditions are usually blameless undertakings that convey joyfulness to all who experience them.

Possibly, you could find the representation of death in Mr. Graves. He is the leader of the extravagant event. He does not play a significant part in this story, but like true death, presides over people, lurking in the background seeking whom he may devour. Within his town he has power as the postmaster, and he uses that power to give authority to Mr. Summers to conduct the lottery. This relates to the theme that society is pushing their sins onto one who bears all the consequences. Society purges their wrongdoings away from themselves and always looks for a fall-guy. In the story, this ends up being Tessie Hutchinson. She ultimately meets her doom. Mr. Graves could be considered the provider of this bad outcome because without him, the proper authority would not be given. Without him, there would be no death!

As hard as it might be to believe, there is actually one more type of symbol that can be identified; numbers can be used to signify a deeper meaning. The stool that the black box of tragedy is placed upon has three legs. Since the box is a depiction of demise and gloom, the three legs could be each a portion from the Christian theory of the Divine Trinity. This concept holds true to being three in one. This can be understood as the crown of the stool that bonds each leg together. Once more, Jackson uses her symbolism as a key to religion. One leg would be seen as the Father while the other two trailed as the Son and Holy Ghost. If a believer of God, one would know that the Trinity embraces all the supremacy of the earth. Everything rests in its

hands. This can be reestablished as how the stool holds up the vital component to the lottery, the black box.

Additionally, luck is transported to attention when Old Man Warner voices his age. He has made it to the great age of seventy-seven. Most individuals comprehend that good fortune is coupled with the number seven.

Throughout American civilization and tradition, seven is supplementary with being the luckiest of all numbers. Due to this detail, one can frequently locate sevens pictured with four leaved clovers around St. Patrick's Day. In the story, there is not only one seven declared but two. This instantly doubles the extent of blessing that Old Man Warner has. Plus, he enthusiastically confesses to having the luck of the draw. The odds have been in his favor throughout the years. He has been able to grow to a ripe age without ever being effected by the lottery. This emphasizes what kind of luck this man possesses. He has been fortunate to not reap the penalties of such a ghastly occurrence.

Optimistically speaking, one is now readily capable to pick out the different styles of symbols that can be unmasked during a story. Likewise, be vulnerable to various alternatives of what each thing could represent. As long as the verification in the text can back up opinions, no one should be anxious to voice what they sincerely sense is being indicated. Jackson used objects, characters, and numbers to initiate internal reactions and shape a deeper gist for her story. Each one enhances meaningful weight to the themes exhibited in her labor, and she uses her symbols to unveil religious, governmental, and community issues present within society. No one

distinguishes what might have been the motivating trigger for Jackson to write this piece, but it is easy to perceive that she aspired to bring the tribulations that she suffered throughout her life to light and make them relevant to the eyes and hearts of her readers everywhere.