

The lottery by shirley jackson with works cited page assignment

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“ The Lottery’ by Shirley Jackson is about Symbolism “ The Lottery,” a short story written by Shirley Jackson, is a tale about an inhumane and horrific tradition that a community celebrates every year between 10 a. M. And noon on June 27, a sunny day, in a New England village (“ Cummings Study Guide”). Not only is this story about tradition but it also hides the meaning of symbolism as well. The setting takes place in a small village consisting of about three hundred people.

On June twenty-seventh of every year, the members of this traditional community hold a village wide lottery in which everyone is expected to participate. A black box holds hundreds of pieces of paper that each member of the community must choose from. There is one piece of paper that has a marking of a dot on it. The paper with this marking means an unfair fate for the person who has picked it. This fate is ultimately a casual murder of being stoned to death that the whole town is guilty of. In this lottery, the winner sacrifices his or her own life for the sake of the tradition.

Through the actions and contrast of settings, Shirley Jackson shows the inhumanity of the traditional lottery and points out the cruelty of people and the relationship between the people. It becomes apparent this community is very weak-minded. The people in this community have no respect for the ritual itself, they just want to hurry up and find out who won, and get to the stoning. In response to questions about the “ meaning” of Long 2 the story, Shirley Jackson wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle (July 22, 1948): “ Explaining just what had hoped the story to say is very difficult.

I suppose, hoped, by setting a particularly brutal ancient rite in the present and in my own village to shock the story's readers with a graphic determination of the pointless violence and neural inhumanity in their own lives." ("Private Demons. The Life of Shirley Jackson"). The symbols of "The Lottery" become a bit clearer when you consider and understand that the author was a woman in 1948 America (Modern Short Stories). This made her someone who had a lot of reason to find the longstanding traditions to be just as vile as those traditions in "the Lottery".

Whether this was segregation, the lack of free voting rights or any of the many other traditions which still exist primarily because they have always existed. These are traditions which are often difficult for those who are not hurt by them to see clearly and that stories like "The Lottery" help to illuminate. In addition, a woman being the one chosen by the lottery is important. This is in some way the author putting herself symbolically into the place of the victim. Just as important, it shows the tradition has subverted the natural instinct men have to protect women.

It also made the victim of the lottery someone who was hurt by tradition in the nonfunctional world as well. Slide 6 of 6 "The Lottery" is filled with symbols. This story is in many ways a parable more than a traditional story. A society so mired in its traditions that it has lost the ability to even look at the reasons for those traditions, but instead follows them blindly even when they hurt its citizens. Since this is a danger every society faces "The Lottery" remains relevant in part because the symbols in the story are never fully explained ("The Lottery: Symbolic Tour").

The Lottery is just another day to the people of this community. The people pile the stones high in the corner and gather on-time before the drawing. The women are gossiping and the children are playing with the stones that are piled in the corner, seeming oblivious to the horror that they agree with yet you can tell they are almost trying to hide their nervousness. The stones are a symbol for tradition. Rocks ancient and remind one of a simpler, more basic time. The traditions that the people follow are barbaric in nature and have been around for a very long time.

The villagers in the story lack of the value of human being. " Well, now," Mr.. Summers said," guess we better get started , get this over with, co's we can go back to work . Anybody anti here? " (Video documentary). What Mr.. Summers said means that the people in the village consider the terrible " crime" of tradition as normal thing. The villagers would et used to the fact that the value of human life is not so important. Even the children consider killing somebody as if to kill an animal. The village obviously lacks the value of a human being throughout the story as we do in the world that we live in today.

Throughout the story, the reader gets an odd feeling regarding the residents and their annual practice. Not until the end does the reader realize to know what the lottery is about. Thus, from the beginning of the story until almost the end, there is overwhelming sense that something terrible is about to happen due to the Jackson's SE of foreshadowing through the depiction of characters and setting. The period of time that the villagers were living is completely different from our culture today. The tradition means a lot to the

villagers because it has occurred since the village was first established. As a normal thing to villagers to keep that tradition from generation to generation. You can see that even though the villagers act as if they are attending a reunion, there is a fear as well among them. The village reveals this fear in their questions after the first round: " Who is it? Who's got it? Is it the Dunbar? Is it the Watson? " The Dunbar and the Watson are the least productive families in village, with Mr.. Dunbar leg broken and Mr.. Watson dead. This unconscious fear that uselessness determines the lottery's " winner" produces incentive for diligent work.

Again we can see the fear as reading when the villagers' reactions while they were gathering. " They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed". The villagers were not comfortable during the lottery. The adults seem on edge, but the children actually don't understand what is going on. All they know is that the stones are fun to play with and they are getting ready to throw them at an innocent member of the village. This is terrible violence of the children, and everyone teaches the children this by example because it is tradition.

It is a horrible crime that the children help kill someone in a violent way. Shirley Jackson shocked her audience and made us think about our actions today in situations and how we are with our children. We follow traditions even though some are ludicrous which our children see us do as they grow up. At next, relationships in a family were very different from relationships in present family life. Like when Mrs.. Hutchinson family is chosen in the first

round; objecting that her daughter and son-in-law “ didn’t take their chance”. Mr..

Summers reminds her that “ daughters draw with their husbands’ families,” showing that power is exclusively held in the hands of males in families. Also, it shows that all of the people were thinking about themselves and how to survive. When Mrs.. Hutchinson was chosen to die, her husband didn’t show any emotional reactions to his wife. All the people just wanted to take care of themselves and survive. It symbolizes how we have become desensitizing o so many things in the world we live in today. Things we should fight for in society but we do not simply because it is a tradition that we are immune to.

We learn throughout the story that the power and traditional aspect of the lottery has slowly diminished. In the case of Mrs.. Hutchinson, the lottery had been present within the neighboring towns; however, the lottery had been ended. The people of the town believed that the box represented tradition and therefore were reluctant to make another one. This box is representative of the lottery in that they have both worn down and are in need of change. The lottery is a good example of how people conform to the situation that they are put in.

People go along with the lottery because in their town it is socially acceptable and is part of tradition. However, this tradition IS beginning to wane and this goes on unnoticed by the townspeople. They have no guilt and no remorse to pick up a rock and whip it at the winner of the lottery. The Lottery is an extreme tradition that the people of a community abide by that

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symbolizes the horrible acts that we the world have performed for years and that we still in live today that go unnoticed.