

Aristotle's poetics vs. the lottery and the bourne identity

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



Aristotle's Poetics vs. The Lottery & The Bourne Identity In Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," the structure and the arrangement of the incidents are very important because they are what drive the plot forward. On an initial reading of the story, the reader is drawn in because they are wondering what is going to happen next. Additionally, the reader is intrigued because they want to know what is behind the odd behavior of the townspeople. The incidents in this story are structured in such a way that they slowly reveal odd behaviors that could lead the reader to anticipate the reason for the behavior and the actions of the characters. For example, at the beginning of the story we have people gathering together for what seems to be a normal lottery. Then, we realize that this is no ordinary lottery because all the people seem nervous and afraid of winning. The stones that the children stack up are a foreshadowing of what is going to happen, but it doesn't necessarily give away the ending. The reader knows that winning this lottery isn't a good thing, so they may now be speculating about why it is such a bad thing to win. Getting the reader intrigued without giving away the ending drives the structure and arrangements of the incidents that occur in this tragedy. In this story, the characters are of secondary importance to the plot and the message that is conveyed. What gives the story its "soul" is the order of events which, in turn, builds up suspense and momentum. In the movie, "The Bourne Identity," the arrangement and structure of the incidents are also very important in moving the plot forward. The first incident occurs when Jason Bourne wakes up in the fishing boat and doesn't know who he is. Every incident that follows is a result of him trying to figure out who he is and who he works for. Thus, the plot is structured so that it moves from

instance to instance based on a problem that requires a resolution. The government agency that trained Bourne needs to find him since he is capable of causing problems for them and endangering their operation. These conflicting interests are what make the plot move from one instance to another. At the end of the movie, the previous incidents compel Bourne to meet with his employers. His meeting leads to the discovery of who he is and the plot is resolved. However, the ending fits in with Aristotle's definition of a tragedy because "the downfall of the utter villain" is not achieved. Although Bourne has escaped for a time, the bad guys (the government agency) still exists and are still in operation. In both the short story and the movie, the characters are not quite as important as the plot because the cause and effect incidents are what move a tragedy's plot forward. Both of these stories inspire fear and pity, which is also essential to a good tragedy in Aristotle's view. We pity the woman who is stoned to death for no good reason and also the way the corrupt government agency uses Bourne. Also, in the short story, we sense the fear that would overcome us of wondering if we will be the one chosen to die this year and how terrifying it would be to live in such a society. Additionally, as Aristotle says, a tragic plot is most effective when "the tragic incident occurs between those who are near and dear to one another." The members of the community in "The Lottery" are all close with each other, yet they will kill each other merely because it is an established rule. This story has a very unhappy ending, which is also essential to a tragedy. "The Bourne Identity" has a much happier ending, but could still be considered a tragic plot because the villain has not been defeated and will still be pursuing Bourne. References Aristotle. (335 BC). Poetics. Retrieved

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