

# The lottery by shirley jackson

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



There are many characters that are named in Shirley Jackson's short story, "The Lottery". Mr. Summers, a kindly man who runs a coal business, Mr. Martin and his sons, Baxter and Bobby. There is Mr. Graves, the man who helped Mr. Summers prepare the lottery, and Old Man Warner. There is Mr. Hutchinson, Mrs. Hutchinson, and their daughter Eva and son-in-law, Don—just to name a few. And although Jackson's story has many characters, she is most interested in the social phenomenon of the lottery than she is in the characters, themselves.

Instead, the characters serve as a means to depict "a graphic demonstration of the pointless violence and general inhumanity in people's lives" (213).

From the start of the story, throughout, and in the end, Jackson defines her view of society's insouciant attitude toward violence with the villagers' apathetic way of life. Every year on June 27th, the families of the village (and of other towns, too) gather in the center of town and participate in a lottery which culminates with the stoning death of a member of one of the families.

This heinous tale takes place amid a pleasant setting, "The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green" (213).

She writes of the children playing and little boys gathering stones that are stockpiled and guarded and ready for the kill. Jackson stupefies the reader as she describes how the lottery is meticulously prepared by Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves, with such pomp and circumstance: "There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open" (214).

Then there's poor Mrs. Hutchinson, who, in her ominous late arrival, is

greeted by Mr. Summers, " Thought we were going to have to get on without you, Tessie", and she jokingly replies, " Wouldn't have me leave m'dishes in the sink, now would you, Joe? " (215). It is this kind of small-talk among the villagers that makes this incredulous social phenomenon more significant than the characters. As fate would have it, Mr. Hutchinson draws the slip of paper with the black dot on it. " You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted.

I saw you. It wasn't fair! " (217). Fair? Because her husband draws the paper with the black dot on it, it is inevitable that someone from herfamilyor even herself, will be stoned to death. " Be a good sport, Tessie. All of us took the same chance" (217). Even the innocent children are included in the lottery. Do these people have any sense of right or wrong? Tessie Hutchinson draws the paper with the black dot on it. Her neighbors, her friends, " and someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles" (218), with which to hurl upon his mother.

This sick ritual spares no one. The mere thought of this annual lottery is mind-boggling. The matter-of-fact way in which the villagers carried themselves throughout the event as though they are conducting an election of some sort is unconscionable. Jackson's writing is brimming with obdurate expressions. As the stoning begins, " All right, folks, let's finish quickly", (218). They want to " be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner" (213). Unbelievable. Hello Lisa, I really enjoyed the insight you offered in your journal.

You make very good use of the book by including a great number of citations in your essay and your vocabulary definitely adds to the reader's understanding of your journal and the passage overall. While you have ample evidence to support your claims throughout your entry, I found a few grammatical and technical errors that I would like to point out:

- “ And although Jackson's story has many characters, she is most interested in the social phenomenon of the lottery than she is in the characters, themselves. – You do not need a comma before “ themselves”, as a comma separates the thoughts and almost prepares the reader for a new thought.
- “ She writes of the children playing and little boys gathering stones that are stockpiled and guarded and ready for the kill. ” – A better way of writing this could be: “ She writes of children playing and gathering stones to be stockpiled, guarded, and readied for the kill. ”
- “ Jackson stupefies the reader as she describes how the lottery is meticulously prepared by Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves, with such pomp and circumstance...” – Again, you do not need a comma before “ with such pomp and circumstance”, as you are not introducing a new thought.
- Putting “ unbelievable” at the end of your journal weakens it a little bit as you do not further the claim and give it some evidence.

Overall, I think you did a really great job answering the question and giving solid evidence to your claims. From your journal essay, I was able to see that

the social phenomenon that the writer is talking about is the desensitizing of our culture as a whole! Good work and good luck for the rest of the semester!