

# Compare short stories

Literature



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Compare short stories Compare short stories Understanding the plight of characters in any literary piece is an essential part of knowing more about the piece. Often, characters have motivations that determine how they react to the situations they go through in the course of a literary piece (Beach, 2005). These motives are mostly predicated on the circumstances that prevail in the process of the literary work. This essay will examine the responses to social norms by Tessie and Georgiana in “ the Birthmark” and “ The Lottery” respectively.

In Shirley Jackson’s “ The Lottery”, Tessie Hutchinson stands out as a free-spirited woman who is non-conforming to the rigors set forth by the society. By her admission, Tessie says, “ I forgot what day it was” despite the fact that the lottery is a routine event. Also, Tessie is so chained to her chores that she even tells Joe that, “ Wouldn’t have me leave dishes in the sink...” Tessie stands out by defying the norms set by society when she speaks out about the unfairness of the lottery after her husband picks up the white paper with a dot that implies he will be stoned. Her outspoken nature makes the lottery be repeated with Tessie ending up with the dreaded white paper with a black dot. Even when the crowd stones her, she still speaks out about the unfairness of the lottery.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “ The Birthmark”, Georgiana stands out as a conformer to the norms set forth by the society. She is submissive to her husband, doing everything by him as per societal demands. She does everything to please her husband, including giving consent to her husband to remove her birthmark. Besides, Georgiana affirms her position by telling her husband to, “ Either remove this dreadful hand or take my wretched

life”. Even after becoming privy to the danger posed by the procedure to remove her crimson birthmark, Georgiana reluctantly still allows her husband to proceed with the process. At the end of it all, she meets her death.

Tessie and Georgiana have different personalities regardless of the fact that they both lose their lives in the end. Tessie is a non-conformer to societally determined roles while Georgiana is a conformer. Tessie is not subjugated by her husband as should be the norm while Georgiana is heavily suppressed by her husband. As such, a vast chasm exists between Georgiana and Tessie in their reactions to the “ stigma” of society.

Tessie makes her decisions with clarity despite the shackles placed on women by society while Georgiana succumbs to the restraints of society by letting her husband dominate her. Georgiana allows her husband to make a crucial but dangerous decision for her so as to please him – this leads to her death. Tessie points out the injustice of the lottery even in the midst of demands from her husband that she keeps quiet. Even with her execution, Tessie stands firm to transcend the shackles of societal intimidation.

The two characters, Tessie, and Georgiana face similar fates at the end – death. However, Tessie and Georgiana differ as to how they react to societal norms – Georgiana is submissive while Tessie is not submissive. Georgiana conforms to the demands placed on her by society by allowing her husband to make decisions for her. Tessie defies society by making decisions on her own without the fear.

## References

Beach, R. W. (2005). *Conducting Research on Teaching Literature: The*

Influence of Texts, Contexts, and Teacher on Responses to Multicultural Literature. Online Submission.