

Analysis of the lottery by shirley jackson

Literature



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The Lottery Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" is an excellent portrait of how quickly a person can change during a situation, especially when someone's life is at risk. In Jackson's short story, the lottery is an age-old tradition that involves the townspeople coming together to determine, by drawing slips of paper from a black box, who among them will be stoned to death.

Throughout the course of the short story, the behaviors and emotions of the townspeople gradually change from prior to the lottery until after the stoning. These abrupt and noticeable changes shed an interesting light on how people are in real life in regard to situations, environments, and their own well-being.

The people of the village are like any other small, close-knit community. Their kindness and compassion towards one another is genuine. All of the children are friends and get along, and the husbands and wives find good company with one another. In the real world, scenes like these are common in small neighborhoods and towns. Neighbors consider themselves family and they all look out for the safety of each other. However, this picturesque community is capable of changing beyond recognition as "The Lottery" revealed.

People are more concerned about themselves than they are about others, regardless of any bond or relationship they may have with the people around them. While they are willing to help someone else out, their own safety ends up being the top priority and they are prepared to shunt aside the needs of others. Mrs. Hutchinson, Mrs. Dunbar, and Mrs. Delacroix all got along prior to the lottery, gossiping and teasing one another. They were not necessarily excited about the lottery, but they were taking the event in stride. Whatever happened, happened, and all they could do was wait for it to be finished.

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This abruptly changed as soon as the situation and environment altered and danger was presented.

When Mr. Hutchinson picked the slip that condoned one of his family members to death, another slip was drawn that declared Mrs. Hutchinson to be the one to be stoned. The bond of the close-knit community completely shattered. The friends that had greeted her and comforted her were now sighing in relief at the fact that they had not drawn the marked people. They were also closing in on Mrs. Hutchinson with their stones. The danger had passed for everyone, the festivities were about to begin, and now they were allowed to look out for themselves.

Human beings find no difficulty in switching the direction of their concern and protection. They pretend to care for the safety of everyone around them, but as soon as the danger turns on them, or when they are no longer a target, they feel that they are allowed to act however they want. The characters of “ The Lottery” could not have been more obvious in how much they cared for one another. Once the lottery began, however, it became every man for themselves. This reaction is common in real life as the loyalties of humanity switch to meet their own needs before the needs of others.