

Shirley Jackson interview



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Interview with Shirley Jackson I still remember the day we were assigned to do a research paper on a piece of literature we had read in my English 198 class.

The story I chose to write my paper on was “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, it was one of my favorites. Luckily for me Mrs. Jackson lived in my neighborhood and my parents were friends with her and her husband. So I knew it would not be difficult to set up an interview with her for my research paper. One day after getting home from school, I met my mother in the living room so I told her that I was doing a research paper on Mrs.

Jackson and asked if she could set up an interview for me. The following day I was thrilled to hear that my mom had successfully arranged for me to have my interview. On the day of the interview I walked to Mrs. Jackson’s home, it was only about five minutes away from my home. I remember feeling a bit nervous as I pressed the door bell, within a couple of seconds Mrs. Jackson opened the door and welcomed me with a beautiful smile.

As we walked towards the parlor she asked how my parents were doing, I told her they were doing fine. After that she asked me if I was thirsty, I kindly said I was not. She paused for a few seconds than told me to begin.

Interviewer: Mrs. Jackson, thank you for agreeing to do this interview.

I have a couple of questions to ask. Mrs. Jackson: You’re welcome, so what would you like to know? Interviewer: To start off, where were u born? And did you grow up there? Mrs. Jackson: I was born in San Francisco. No, I actually grew up in California (Jackson 251).

Interviewer: were you interested in writing as a child? Or was it something you developed later in life? Mrs. Jackson: I became interested in writing at an early age. I actually won my first poetry prize when I was twelve. Later on in high school I kept a diary to record my writing progress (“ Shirley Jackson”).

Interviewer: That’s very interesting. Have you ever used a place you have lived in as a setting for any of your works? Mrs.

Jackson: Yes, in my first novel the setting was based on Burlingame, a suburb I lived in, in San Francisco (Murphy). After my first set of questions Mrs. Jackson asked if we could take a break, she then walked into the kitchen. While I was by myself in the parlor, I noticed some family pictures on the wall and next to them were some of the awards she had won for her works. When she returned from the kitchen, she brought some sandwiches and drinks.

I took a sip of orange juice then continued with the interview. Interviewer: In “ The Lottery” what point were you trying to make by having the villagers stone one of their members. Mrs. Jackson: I wanted to dramatize graphically the pointless violence in people’s lives, to reveal the general inhumanity of man (Griffin). Interviewer: I see.

As I read the story in school, I realized that the lottery was a means of finding a sacrifice for the season’s harvest. Is that the only thing the lottery is supposed to represent? Mrs. Jackson: That’s the main thing it represents. However, it also illustrates how societies tend to hold onto traditions, even meaningless ones, revealing our need for ritual and belonging (Griffin).

Interviewer: Finally Mrs.

Jackson, what message are you trying to get across to the public with this story? Mrs. Jackson: I want people to learn that, " custom and law, when sanctioned by a selfish, unthinking populace, can bring an otherwise democratic and seemingly just society to the brink of paganism" (Yarmove). Interviewer: That's very interesting. Well Mrs. Jackson, I think I have enough information. Thank you for allowing me to interview you.

When we finished the interview Mrs. Jackson walked me to the door, I thanked her again for her time, than I started to head back home. When I got home and began to write my paper, I was just amazed at how fortunate I was, to have the author of one of the stories I read in school as a neighbor. The next week of school I got my graded paper and I was not surprised by my grade. I smiled as I read all the positive remarks my teacher had written down about my paper.

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