

# Marxist criticism

Business



Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely. In the short story *The Lottery* it was considered lucky to be in a position of power. The town was run in different ways than most. Once a year they held the lottery, not as we know it. The person in the town that pulls the right card soon realizes how wrong they really are.

The person to get the card with the bold black dot is stoned to death. Shirley Jackson is the author of this story; she was born December 14, 1916 and died August 8, 1965. This was her best known story. She was a popular writer in her time, but is more recognized now. In the short story *The Lottery*, Jackson shows how positions of power are important to the characters that possess them and have consequences for other characters.

To start off, to have power in this town didn't seem crucial, but in many ways it was. In the story "The post master, Mr. Graves, followed him, carrying a three-legged stool, and the stool was put in the center of the square and Mr. Summers set the black box on it" (Jackson). Mr.

Summers is the head of everything in the town. In the story it states that he has time and energy to dedicate to activities. Mr. Graves is just the post master; he also has some sort of importance and entitlement in the town. No matter what there is always someone with a higher power over the next. In this story being in charge is an advantage, to run the lottery, rather than take part in it because in this town it could be the difference between life and death.

Mr. Summers says, "Glad to see your mothers got a man to do it" (Jackson). Mr. Summers was talking about drawing the paper from the black box for the

lottery. In this society the men appear to have the power. Picking a ticket is an important decision and Mr.

Summers wants to see a man pull the paper instead of a woman. In the town both of the main authority figures are men. Furthermore, it's stated that "Wife draws for husband" Mr. Summers said "Don't you have a grown boy to do it for you, Janey?" (Jackson). Mr.

Summers is distraught that Janey, a woman, is drawing the paper from the lottery for her husband. It's not normal in this town for woman to be participating in the role that a man would normally be in. Once all the cards had been picked a woman named Tessie selected the paper with that black dot. Her fate had been decided for her from there. The author may have picked a woman to be stoned for a reason, the woman in the town suffered.

The men were looked at as the stronger figures and more useful to keep around. The town's people surrounded Tessie "The children had stones already. And someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles" (Jackson). Everyone in the town is now superior to Tessie. The woman that loses the lottery is not inferior to anyone in the town, even the children.

She feels powerless, while everyone else has an advantage over her. In the short story The Lottery, Jackson shows how positions of power are important to characters that possess them and have consequences for other characters. This work shows that to have power can always be an advantage in life. In order to have power one needs to work to reach the top. If a person is not in power they may struggle through events, and realize there are consequences for lack of effort.

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It often times is not fair to those who have less power. It was not fair for Tessie to be stoned, but that was the way the town was run, and the rules were obeyed.