

"the interlopers" and
"the lottery"
comparative essay



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In the short stories "The Lottery" and "The Interlopers," the authors Shirley Jackson and Saki (respectively) use pacing, text structure, and strong moods to build suspense. Through the use of the literary elements mentioned above, the reader is left surprised at the end of both stories. The authors might not have used the literary elements in entirely similar ways, but they have the same effect on each story: causing anticipation for the reader. Through the use of pacing, the authors are able to develop their stories and cause suspense, as the surprise endings of their tales draw near.

From the very first sentence in the book "The Lottery," Jackson sets the pacing of the book for the reader by saying, "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". Throughout the book, the author never strays from the painfully slow pace thus creating anxiety within the reader to figure out what the lottery is and why it is important. While Shirley Jackson creates suspense by keeping a slow pacing, Saki creates suspense and tension by increasing the pace of the book as more action happens. Although the author's use of pacing creates tension and suspense, the author's structure of text also creates suspense.

The authors of "The Lottery" and "The Interlopers" also use the structure of the text to build their stories. Through character development, both authors show how the characters' life affects what happens. For example. In "The Interlopers" the structure of text develops the characters by showing there has been a lasting rivalry between the Gadwitz and Znaeym families, it also creates tension because it shows that the rivalry has lasted a very long time. This is shown in the second paragraph when Saki writes, "A famous lawsuit,

in the days of his grandfather, had wrestled it from the illegal possession of the neighboring family of petty landowners; the dispossessed party had never acquiesced in the judgement of the courts, and a long series of poaching affrays and similar scandals had embittered the relations between the families." The quote indicates why the Gadwitz and Znaeym families dislike each other which sets off a chain reaction of events taking place in the book.

While Saki uses character development, Shirley Jackson uses chronological order so the reader can get all the details of the lottery and what it is. Jackson describes the procedure of the lottery without actually telling what it is when she says, " There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open. There were the lists to make up-of heads of families. heads of households in each family. members of each household in each family. There was the proper swearing-in of Mr. Summers by the postmaster, as the official of the lottery." By saying what happens without actually saying what happens makes the reader anxious to find out the purpose of the lottery. In addition to pacing, and structure of the text, the author uses the mood to create suspense and tension.

In the stories " The Lottery" and " The Interlopers," both authors' uses of mood builds suspense. In " The Lottery" the opening sentence of the book gives the setting of the story. The opening sentence says, " 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". the reader can imagine in their head what the scene and what the atmosphere is like. The mood evokes feelings in the reader at the end of the book that

contradicts the calm setting used in the beginning. Whereas in "The Interlopers" the author starts off with a suspenseful mood saying, "In a forest of mixed growth somewhere on the eastern spurs of the Carpathians, a man stood one winter night watching and listening, as though he waited for some beast of the woods to come within the range of his vision and, later, of his rifle. But the game for whose presence he kept so keen an outlook was none that figured in the sportsman's calendar as lawful and proper for the chase; Ulrich von Gradwitz patrolled the dark forest in quest of a human enemy." This statement causes the reader to wonder who the human enemy is and why he is hunting them. Like Jackson's, Saki's word choices and setting increase the suspense and tension in the narrative.

In the stories "The Lottery" and "The Interlopers," authors Shirley Jackson and Saki use pacing, the structure of text and mood to build suspense. The importance of using these literary techniques is to keep your audience interested. If there was nothing to look forward to, the readers wouldn't want to read onward. I predict if the authors hadn't used pacing to build suspense, the endings would have been more surprising and more confusing because there was nothing that led up to such finishes.