

The lottery – irony and imagery essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When you hear the word lottery, you probably think of winning a large sum of money before being stoned to death. “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson brings this horrible idea to life. While the overall mood of the story depicts a typical day in a small rural town, through great use of imagery and irony the reader is set up for an unusual ending. Shirley Jackson uses a great deal of imagery to set the mood of the story. At first glance the reader gets a visual picture of a pristine, tranquil summer day, a day when “ the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was rich and green.”(p. 74) The town’s children are collecting rocks like young children regularly do. The men are “ speaking of rain, planting, tractors and taxes.”(p. 74) The women are making small talk with one another. It seems like a regular day in a regular town. With the introduction of the black box the overall mood of the town’s people begins to change, the air is uneasy and nervous. The old black box had become shabby, splintered, and faded. Zero improvements were put in to making the black box better. The idea of the black box going to shambles leads one to believe that the town’s people fear the box.

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Although the reader realizes that the box is dreaded, his or her rationalization is then again changed when Old Man Warner speaks. His words lead the reader to assume that the lottery is a good thing and beneficial to the town by saying, “ Lottery in June corn be heavy soon. First thing you know, we’d all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns.” (p. 77) Upon further reading the town’s people begin to go up to the black box and pick a piece of paper from it. Still the town’s people seem to act somewhat normal. Everyone then holds their little piece of paper over their head.

Thinking that the citizen who has the black dot on their slip of paper has quite possibly won something: the reader then realizes all at once what the stones were for, and why the black box was feared. The person was now to be stoned to death, a sacrifice to some divine being to ensure a plentiful harvest. Through the use of irony and imagery the reader is taken on an up and down roller coaster of assumption. Throughout the entire story up until the ending it is hard to tell what the people are doing. Shirley Jackson does a great job of setting up a typical outcome, then throwing an extreme twist on the end that was never in hindsight .