

Character of Mrs. Hutchinson in the Lottery

Literature



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CHARACTER OF MRS. HUTCHINSON IN THE LOTTERY INTRODUCTION 'The Lottery' is a marvellous short story written by Shirley Jackson. It was first published in The New Yorker on June 26, 1948. Despite its beautiful narration, the story is filled with haunting imagery expressed in a terrible way. It throws light on the faults of the traditional ritualistic system. On the whole the story beautifully exhibits the patriarchal system of the village and the brutality it thrusts on the people. With this small introduction, I would like to focus on the character of Tess Hutchinson in this paper.

THE LOTTERY SYSTEM

As we read the short story, we understand that the term, 'lottery' is not that which is associated with winning prize, but it refers to the traditional system of ritual, where as a mark of sacrifice people were put to death. Because, people believed that sacrifices would suffice God and He may provide his blessing for their prayers. In this way the story presents us with a heightened image of superstition to which people were sticking.

CHARACTER OF TESS HUTCHINSON

We are introduced to Tess Hutchinson only in the middle of the story as she suddenly rushes in from nowhere. Then, as the story progresses we get to know her as a middle aged housewife and mother of four children and that she is the wife of Hutchinson. This is the overall image of the her. Through the story we come to know a lot about her character. We see that things do not run smooth to her because, she is the chosen lamb for the sacrifice this year. After all the picking up of papers is done, people eagerly look at it and rejoice except Mrs. Hutchinson for, the piece of paper that she holds has the black mark on it which means, that she will be the sacrificial goat. When she is unwilling to reveal this truth, her own husband snatches the paper from

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her hand and shows it to the crowd. This particular instance clearly shows her submissive nature. She is not able to do anything in return. She keeps quite. This submissiveness also portrays the authority of men over women. This can be understood clearly from the words of her husband running thus: " Shut up, Tessie," This peculiar use of words brings out the dominating feature of men over women.

CONCLUSION

In this way, the character of Mrs. Hutchinson stands as a symbol for the universal suffering of women. Through the treatment of her in the story, we comprehend that there is no hope for individual consideration. This is also no value for human life. When all the villagers including her own family stone her to death, we come to know that through them the author wants to represent the nature of savagery in humans. It is only because of Tess, we understand this point. The gentleness of her character also symbolises the fact that good being destroyed in the cruel hands of tradition. In better terms, we can say that she represents morality and her destruction at last is the clue that shows the loss of ethics in the modern world. Her dying words, " It isnt fair, it isnt right" sums up the total action of modern man in the world. Through her we learn that people may do anything to acquire something.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Jackson, Shirley. The Lottery