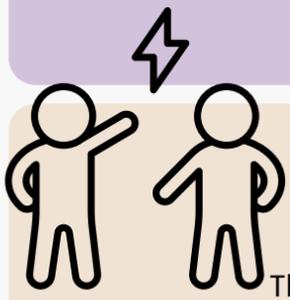


THE LOTTERY

BY: SHIRLEY JACKSON - SHORT STORY

Published in The New Yorker in June 1948, Just after the World War II, when the world was still dealing with how ordinary people had participated in widespread violence simple by following tradition or authority. Jackson wrote the story partly in response to America complacency and the danger of blindly obeying social customs.



PLOT ELEMENT

Conflict - Central struggle between opposing forces

The story's conflict is Person vs. Society: the townspeople struggle (sometimes silently) against a brutal tradition but feel unable to question it. Tessie Hutchinson becomes the focal point of this conflict as she resists the community's unquestioning loyalty to the ritual.

Quote - "It isn't fair, it isn't right, Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her"



POINT OF VIEW ELEMENT

Third person objective - present events from an outside narrator with no access to characters thoughts

Jackson's detached, reportorial narrator creates a sense of neutrality that makes the shocking ending even more disturbing. Because we never enter the characters' minds, the violence appears "normalized," reinforcing the theme of unquestioned tradition.

QUOTE - "THE CHILDREN HAD STONES ALREADY, AND SOMEONE GAVE LITTLE HUTCHINSON A FEW PEBBLES"

TOPIC VS THEME

Theme - central message

While topics include tradition, violence, and conformity, Jackson develops a theme about the consequences of following tradition without questioning its morality.

QUOTE - "ALTHOUGH THE VILLAGERS HAD FORGOTTEN THE RITUAL AND LOST THE ORIGINAL BLACK BOX THEY STILL REMEMBERED TO USE STONES"



CHARACTER ELEMENT

Static character - does not undergo significant internal change over the story

Nearly all townspeople, Mr. Summers, Old Man Warner, Mrs. Delacroix remain unwavering in their support of the ritual. Their lack of development emphasizes how deeply rooted, unquestioned, and unexamined the tradition is. Only Tessie protests, but even she accepts the ritual until the moment she is chosen.

QUOTE - "THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A LOTTERY, HE ADDED PETULANTLY. BAD ENOUGH TO SEE YOUNG JOE SUMMERS UP THERE JOKING WITH EVERYBODY" - OLD MAN WARNER

SYMBOLISM ELEMENT

Symbol - an object that represents a larger idea beyond its literal meaning

The shabby, splintering black box symbolizes the town's blind devotion to tradition. Despite its age and condition, no one is willing to replace it, just as no one questions the violent ritual it represents.

QUOTE - "THE BLACK BOX GREW SHABBIER EACH YEAR: BY NOW IT WAS NO LONGER COMPLETELY BLACK BUT SPLINTERED BADLY ALONG ONE SIDE"

So What?

"The Lottery" suggests that ordinary people can commit horrific acts when society teaches them that tradition must be obeyed, even when it causes harm. Jackson warns that unquestioned customs and the desire to belong can override personal morality, turning violence into something disturbingly normal.