

## The Lottery

By *Shirley Jackson*

1. Were you surprised by the ending of the story? If not, at what point did you know what was going to happen? How does Jackson start to foreshadow the ending in paragraphs 2 and 3? Conversely, how does Jackson lull us into thinking that this is just an ordinary story with an ordinary town?
2. What is the setting of the story (*time, place, social interactions*)? What kind of mood or atmosphere does it establish for the story? Does it make you more or less likely to anticipate the ending?
3. In what ways are the characters differentiated from one another? Looking back at the story, can you see why Tessie Hutchinson is singled out as the "winner"?
4. What are some examples of irony in this story? For example, why might the title, "The Lottery," or the opening description in paragraph one, be considered ironic?
5. Take a close look at Jackson's description of the black wooden box (paragraph 5) and of the black spot on the fatal slip of paper (paragraph 72). What do these objects suggest to you? Why is the black box described as "battered"? Are there any other symbols in the story?
6. What do you understand to be the writer's own attitude toward the lottery and the stoning? Exactly what in the story makes her attitude clear to us?
7. This story satirizes a number of social issues, including the reluctance of people to reject outdated traditions, ideas, rules, laws, and practices. What kinds of traditions, practices, laws, etc. might "The Lottery" represent?
8. This story was published in 1948, just after World War II. What other cultural or historical events, attitudes, institutions, or rituals might Jackson be satirizing in this story?

### Words in Context:

**For the sentence below, write your own definition of the underlined word based on the context clues contained in the sentence. Then, explain your reasoning for the definition.**

“...some people remembered, there had been a recital of sort, performed by the official of the lottery, a perfunctory, tuneless chant that had been rattle doff duly each year.”

*Perfunctory*: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasoning:

\_\_\_\_\_

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