
The Jeopardy Of Tradition Fate Or Chance

The story "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson was published in 1948. Villagers from an unknown time followed a twisted and inexplicable tradition. Jackson contemporaneously unravels the setting of a fresh warm summer day, where people meet in the square between the post office and bank to play the lottery. A cruel ending comes up ahead in the story after the winner of the lottery, Mrs. Hutchinson gets beaten to death by her own people, including her family members. Jackson provides many messages throughout the reading. The most essential message Jackson carries through the story is how blind and inhumane we become with traditions.

Jackson displays cruelty in the story by showing how willingly the members of the community participate in such horrendous act without question. The villagers are afraid to challenge their past therefore they are frightened by the future. When Old Man Warner heard that the other villages had stop with the tradition of the lottery he said they were a "pack of young fools" (Jackson). He mentioned that "There's always been a lottery" (Jackson). Old Man Warner tries to convince others into keeping the tradition, it had always been around and to think of changing it could be considered a "sin." The basic idea of people additionally shows when Old Man Warner amusingly says, "Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves..." (Jackson). As shown elderly folks are not willing to go out on a limb and detach from the past. By giving explicit insights concerning Old Man Warner's reaction, the author clarifies how people have cold feet towards development.

Obviously, society and its traditions hang on this generally blameless town has destroyed all feeling of a good lead. "Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones" (Jackson), and "Delacroix, eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys" (Jackson). Even the kids themselves were following to such act as if it were any other day in town, they did not even stop to think about what was about to happen next or if it was the right thing to do. The capacity of the townspeople to recognize good and bad has been decimated. The town's failure to stray from tradition and move to various ideas frustrates its advancement. However, following the tradition as before was not as important, "the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, but they still remembered to use stones" (Jackson). Villagers remembered only the malicious part of what to do but not the object presents. Any idea of progress is pushed away as the town individuals are brought over into society's grip, and all they really focused on is going through with the unkind part. "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson demonstrates that society and its traditions, is the name to fault as the most provocative rival.

This controversial reading also hits a nerve and shocks readers. Through this peculiar tradition of killing the innocent, Jackson manages to make us feel indecisive, and question our beliefs. "The death by stoning is ritually performed by fellow villagers who seem to be "common decent folks" and believe that what they are doing will somehow benefit the common good" (Shields). None of the town people had ever question the authority and the history behind these executions that had convinced them that what they are doing is by one way or another to their greatest advantage. However, "some places have already quit the lotteries" (Shields), therefore doubt began to linger among the people. "On another level, we as readers feel quite uncomfortable observing such blind obedience to tradition among the villager" (Shields). For this

reason, we might probably make an association as we witness advance executions and understand that there is "arbitrariness" in these cases too.

In the end, all humankind is completely blind and tends to be part of acts that are remorseless. Mrs. Hutchison has received her prize, and all the villagers had participated on it; so, no one takes responsibility for it. To that end, Jackson lets us know that the only thing left out of everything is violence, which gives some explanation of the town priorities (and maybe of all mankind).

Works Cited

1. Jackson, Shirley. «The Lottery.» Sylvia Barnet, William Burto, William E. Cain, Cheryl Nixon. Literature For Composition an introduction to literature. Eleventh. New York: New Yorker, 1948. 1261-1267.
2. Shields, Patrick J. «Arbitrary condemnation and sanctioned violence in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery".» Contemporary Justice Review (December 2004): 411-419.