The Lottery Essay, Research Paper

The Lottery

When you hear the word lottery, what first comes to your mind? Winning a large sum of money probably comes to mind before being stoned to death does. In the short story ?The Lottery?, Shirley Jackson brings this horrible idea to life. It also raises some universal truth about living in a community and learning to question tradition and its impact on families. Another point risen is that women need to develop their opinions and assert them loud and clear, because this story proves that women, in this day and time, are not letting their mind and mouth follow their heart.

The tradition in one New England area is called the Lottery. Mr. Summers was the conductor of the lottery, and also he organized square dances, the teen club, and the Halloween party. He was not someone who was envied because his wife was a scold and they had no children (p. 132 paragraph 2).

The Lottery consisted of an old black box. Mr. Summers would put papers in the box. The unfortunate to pick the paper with the black dot on it was to be stoned to death.

Many materialistic aspects of the lottery were dropped. The old black box had become shabby, splintered, and faded. Zero efforts were made by anyone to make this box better. At one time, the papers were actually wood chips, back when the town was smaller. Clearly no enhancements have been made to this tradition. This box was not even assigned a safe place for keeping (top of page 133). This box was dreaded, and the people showed that they did not enjoy this ritual.

Mrs. Hutchinson ironically arrives to this ceremony late. When her husband confronts her about the lateness, she replies ?wouldn?t have me leave m?dishes in the sink, now would you, Joe??(p133. bottom paragraph)

The air is uneasy and nervous during the picking. It is clearly understood that this is not something the women in particular look forward to. But it is shown that the men keep this old, tired, dreaded process in tact. At many different points in this story the women are making little comments on how much they dread this tradition. During the lottery, a woman speaks

of a town where they have ended this tradition, Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town, immediately cancels this idea out by saying, ?Pack of crazy fools. Listening to young folks nothing is good enough for them. Next thing you know they will want to go back to living in caves, nobody work anymore and eat acorns.? (p. 135, paragraph 5). Through the whole ceremony there is word of wishing that they would rush to get this over with (p. 135, paragraph 8). One lady even wonders where the time goes every year (p134, paragraph 10).

It seems as though the female voice is not heard, through out this story. It seems as though women at this time have given up hope of change, so that they have excepted it. And the young boys are molded into this pattern of evil destruction that they can not even recognize because when you are that young it is either ?hold someone?s hand or fall in the dust?—(p. 131, paragraph 2), therefore being accustomed to the same mistakes and downfalls of a particular community.

Mrs. Hutchinson must pick for her family, and she ends up with the black dot. Now, because of this pattern, a husband and three children are left with no mommy. This symbolizes how stupid this tradition is.

Why has this town kept such a sad thing alive for so long? Why was this tradition even brought to life?

I do not see a change unless some strong minded, mouthed, and willed women get her point across, and accept that her role in life is different from a mans, so stop following the man and get your point across, because women can see things that men are incapable of realizing. If this would take place, a lot of stupidity will be eliminated and a better quality of life will come about.

Bibliography

report includes citations from Writing Through Literature (Linda Astendig & David Hicks)College Level