The Secret Of The Lottery Essay, Research Paper

The Secret of the Lottery. The Lottery written by Shirley Jackson, is a story thatconveys its message through plot. Suspense in the Lottery playsthe most important role making sure the story, even though short,is well developed and seems prolonged. The Lottery develops slowly and with a lot of detail. Thecharacters in this story don’t experience much development, theyare simply named to give the story a series of steps or a senseof direction, and of course for the relation of actual events.Since the beginning we (the readers), are given a fulldescription of the scenery and the feeling that everyone is happyand joyful. We get our first taste of suspense when the blackbox is introduced. Mr. Summers arrives to the square carryingthe black wooden box. We automatically assume that it is ofgreat importance because of the space the villagers leave betweenthemselves and the stool where the box was to be laid, andbecause of the hesitation the villagers experience when Mr. Summers asks for help in holding the box (Jackson 675). The process of the lottery itself is prolonged withsuspense. Never in the first pages do we really know what thewhole thing is about. Suspense in this case is built upon bytelling us exactly how people prepare for this event and thespecial arrangements that have to be made nights prior to theevent. For example, we know that the night before, Mr. Summersand Mr. Graves made up the slips of paper and put them in thebox, and it was then taken to the safe of Mr. Summers coalcompany and locked until Mr. Summers was ready to take it to thesquare the next morning (Jackson 675). We also are told later onthe same page, that there was a lot of fussing to be done beforeMr. Summers could declare the lottery open. There were lists tobe made-up of heads of families, heads of household in eachfamily, and members of each household in each family. The most ironic part in the story which is loaded up withdetail and suspense is when Mrs. Hutchinson arrives late to theevent. There seems to be a lot of inexplicable development; notin the character, but in the actions this character takes uponarriving to the scene of action. Surely we wonder why theprolongation in story, and the suspense just rises. The ironicphrases are detailed by exclamations such as “clean forgot whatday it was, thought my old man was out back stacking wood” andremarks by others such as “you are in time, though”, and “thoughtwe were going to have to get on without you”. These opinionsplay a very important role in the story (Jackson 676).

The suspense then deepens when the men start going upand nervously and humorously pick out their papers. (Jackson677). Here is when thoughts start rushing in our head with thequestion of what the event was all about. It is also the firsttime the characters show discomfort or emotions towards theevent, giving a small hint that maybe something bad is about tohappen. A little later in the same page we are seeing that allthe men have gone up and have gotten the little papers form theblack box, and the description the author gives is: by now allthroughout the crowd there were men holding the small foldedpapers in their large hands, turning them over and over nervously(Jackson 677). The climax in the story is reached when the breathless pauseends, and all of the men open their little papers, only to findout that the Hutchinson’s got it. We know something horrible hasjust happened to the Hutchinson’s because of the way BillHutchinson; head of the family, expresses his emotion, standingquiet and staring down at the paper in his hand (Jackson 678).From this point on, we have mixed feelings about the whole story,and what we thought were tied ends get more confusing because wesee how the mom (Mrs. Hutchinson) suggests her daughter take herchances as well when the next drawing for the family memberscomes on. We would never imagine a mom wishing death upon herown daughter, would we?. We then see the Hutchinson childrencoming into the picture, but then we remember that we don’t knowwhat the lottery is about. Children would never be involved insomething evil. With this me, the reader, gets anxious becausewe want to know the end, find the truth of were this long processfinishes. Suspense is at its peak. The grand finale is accomplished by great suspense when eachoneof them; the parents and the three children, take their chances.The little boy in the family is the first to open his paper andthe crowd give out a general sigh of relief, happy to see the boyhad not won the lottery. The most terrifying phrase is thenheard when the little girl in the family only twelve years old isabout to open up her paper, and a little girl in the crowdwhispers “I hope its not Nancy”. That in my opinion is thephrase that gives the story away. Obviously the lottery wasn’tsomething meant to be won, instead it meant loosing something,your life. Our ride or suspense ends with Tessie, or Mrs. Hutchinsongetting the spot on the paper, but for some reason this is notnews. Somehow foreshadowing throughout the whole story told usall along, except since we were so caught up with suspense intrying to figure out the story, we don’t pay attention to thislittle details. Obviously to me, suspense was the key to theplot and the story.