

Before Reading

The Lottery

The Play as Literature: Symbolism

It's hard to imagine life without symbols. What would a valentine mean? A wink? A wedding band? A symbol is anything that has impact above and beyond its ordinary meaning. An author uses symbols to telegraph emotions and ideas straight to the heart of the reader.

To help you understand the symbols in *The Lottery*, pick out the most important items in the play and think about what each suggests—the black box, for instance, or the lottery itself.

The Play as Theatre: Movement

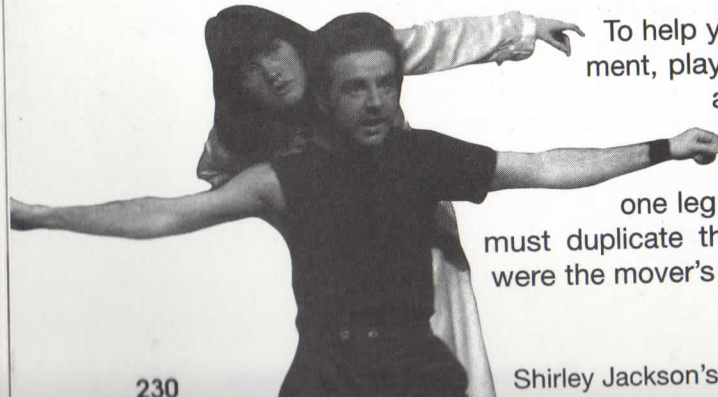
An actor has more than lines to think about on stage. How, where, and when to move is also a major consideration. When *you* are onstage, always be aware of your position in relation to other actors. Where you position yourself tells the audience something about the importance of your character in the scene as well as your relationship to the other characters.

The actor who is moving or talking is generally the one the audience focuses on, so if you are not the dominant character in the scene try not to move. If you are directed to move, you should do so behind the dominant actor. Make eye contact with the audience only if the script or director tells you to do so.

Always sit, stand, and move naturally and with good posture. Try to move in character while maintaining a natural balance. Practice shifting your weight smoothly as you move.

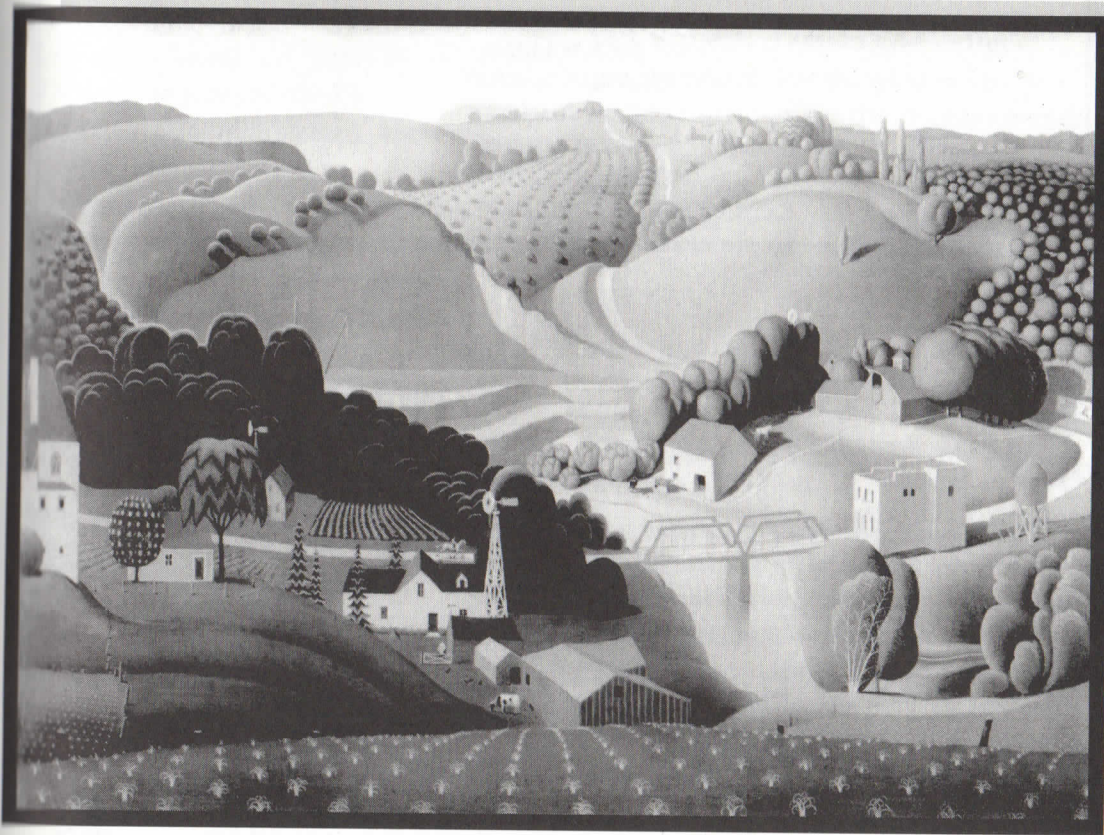
Warm Up!

To help you with body awareness and movement, play the "shadow game." Stand behind a partner. The person who is designated "the mover" slowly makes a broad movement, such as lifting one leg or raising both arms. The "follower" must duplicate the movement as though he or she were the mover's shadow.



The Lottery

by Shirley Jackson



Dramatized by Brainerd Duffield

SETTING

A village square

CHARACTERS

TOMMY

DICKIE

MARTIN

DELACROIX

HUTCHISON

MRS. DUNBAR

MRS. WATSON

MISS BESSOM

JACK WILKINS

OLD MAN WARNER

BELVA SUMMERS

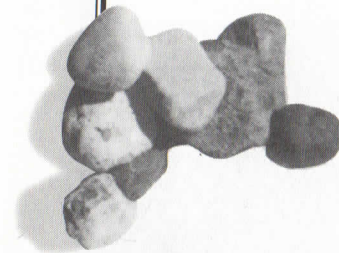
JOE SUMMERS

TESSIE HUTCHISON

EXTRAS: LITTLE GIRL, DAVY, VILLAGERS

TIME

This year. The
27th of June



SCENE: *A bare stage with a few stones lying here and there. No scenery whatsoever is necessary, although curtains can be used.*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The stage is in darkness. Gradually a pool of amber light comes up at C stage. Two boys, TOMMY and DICKIE, enter L, looking about on the ground. From time to time, one of them picks up a stone and puts it in his pocket. The search should continue for about a minute before either of them speaks.

TOMMY. I'm keepin' the best ones right in my pocket.

DICKIE. Me, too.

TOMMY (*indicating R stage*). We oughta make an extra pile over here. Then we could take turns guardin'.

DICKIE. Sure. Then if some other kids

tried to swipe any, we'll be ready for 'em. (*He and TOMMY cross R and begin to build a stockpile of stones at R.*)

(*A GIRL somewhat younger enters UL and crosses to watch them, but the boys ignore her. During this leisurely pantomime, a steeple bell has begun to chime, and the amber light widens, gradually illuminating the full stage.*)

DICKIE (*muttering*). Girls always got to be hangin' around.

TOMMY. I know it. They spoil everything. (*The little girl has attempted to assist DICKIE and TOMMY by adding a stone or two to pile, but they turn their backs on her and, feeling hurt, GIRL goes out R.*)

(*During the preceding, two men, MARTIN and DELACROIX, enter DL and cross to C, conversing quietly.*)

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the preceding, two men, MARTIN and
IX, enter DL and cross to C, con-
quietly.)

MARTIN (*glancing over R*). Children are
always the first to gather.

DELACROIX. Sure—but everybody'll be
comin' now, soon as they hear the bell.

MARTIN (*scanning sky*). Beautiful day
for it.

DELACROIX. Yes, fine. I don't care if it is
my hometown, we got the purtiest
village green of any in the state.

(*Another man, HUTCHISON, has entered UL,
leading his small son, DAVY, by the hand.
They cross to join the others at C.*)

DELACROIX (*to HUTCHISON*). How are
you, Bill?

HUTCHISON. Fred . . . Horace . . .
(*Shakes hands with both men.*) Good to
see you. You both know Davy?

MARTIN (*patting DAVY on head*). Well, I
should hope so. How are you, Davy?
(*To HUTCHISON*) This is his first year,
ain't it?

HUTCHISON. That's right. Never seen a
Lottery before, have you, Dave? (*DAVY
nods.*)

MARTIN. Gonna grow up and be a good
farmer like your dad? (*DAVY nods.*)
That's the boy.

DELACROIX (*amiably*). My son, Chester,
wants to go off to the Agriculture
School and learn a lot of book rub-
bish. I tell him he'd do better to stay
home and learn of his father, same
as I did of mine.

MARTIN. That's right, too. Pitch in and
help pay the taxes.

DELACROIX. I told him a farmer don't
need to develop his mind, long as he
builds up his muscles.

HUTCHISON. A strong back, that's what
you need when you take up farmin'.

DELACROIX. Where's the wife, Bill?

HUTCHISON (*slight pause*). Oh, she'll
be along. (*Frowns and looks about
anxiously*)

(*MRS. DUNBAR and MRS. WATSON enter DL
and cross toward DRC. The men continue to
talk in pantomime.*)

MRS. DUNBAR (*as they cross*). How does
the weather suit you, Myrtle?

MRS. WATSON. Couldn't be better.

MRS. DUNBAR. We always seem to get
good weather for the twenty-seventh.
Never knew it to fail.

MRS. WATSON. Been right cold and wet
for June.

(*MISS BESSOM enters DR and starts toward
DRC.*)

MRS. DUNBAR. Oh, that rain done us
lots of harm. (*Shakes her head*) Too
much rain!

MRS. WATSON. Guess the Lottery ought
to change our luck.

MRS. DUNBAR. That's how the sayin'
goes. (*Sees MISS BESSOM*) Look who's
here. Howdy, Miss Bessom. Why, you
ain't changed a particle!

MISS BESSOM (*slightly piqued*). Who ever
said I had?

MRS. DUNBAR (*scrutinizing her*). They
told me you were gettin' real fleshy,
and it ain't so.

MRS. WATSON. Course it ain't. Hear you
had a weddin' in the family.

MISS BESSOM. Yes—my sister Nina's girl
got married to young Sam Gilliatt
over to Rigby township.

MRS. WATSON. I s'pose that means
she'll be drawin' over there from
now on?

MISS BESSOM. Oh, sure! She's got to draw with *his* family now. (*To MRS. DUNBAR*) I declare, Hazel, it's been a month of Sundays since I seen you. Don't you never come into town?

MRS. DUNBAR. Not if I can help it. Ain't been further than m'own chicken yard—not since Decoration Day, and that's a fact.

MRS. WATSON. One thing about the Lottery, it does bring everyone out, like it or not.

MISS BESSOM. Well, Hazel's got Clyde to wait on, too. How's he makin' out?

MRS. DUNBAR. Oh, he'll be fine! Except he's terrible mad to have to stay home and miss the excitement.

MISS BESSOM. I'll bet. (*She and MRS. WATSON cluck sympathetically, and the women continue to converse silently. DICKIE and TOMMY have drifted off R by now to continue their search for stones offstage. The group at C stage, conversing in pantomime, have worked down to a position at DLC.*)

Other VILLAGERS now drift in UL and UR, taking positions ULC and URC. They chat ad lib, building to a general murmur.

MARTIN (*on spoken cue, "I'll bet."*). Now I got that tractor, I was figurin' I might make the switch from grass to hay silage.

HUTCHISON. Costs about the same to harvest an acre, don't it?

MARTIN. Just about. Cattle don't seem to mind what they're eatin', and I thought I could get away from the risk of bad weather—

DELACROIX (*slight chuckle*). Don't you fret about the weather, Horace. "Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon."

HUTCHISON (*nodding, with a faint smile*). That's what they always told us, ain't it, Fred? (*DELACROIX nods.*)

MISS BESSOM (*glancing about*). Don't see Tessie Hutchison any place, do you?

MRS. WATSON. No, I don't. Bill's standin' right there, though, and little Davy, too.

MISS BESSOM. Got a recipe I borrowed and want to give back to her. It's for the watermelon pickles she won a prize with at the social.

(*JACK WILKINS enters DR and nods to the ladies.*)

JACK. 'Scuse me, ladies. Hi, Miz Dunbar. How's Clyde doin'?

MRS. DUNBAR. Fine, thanks, Jack. Doctor's goin' to take the cast off next week.

JACK. How's he goin' to get the news today?

MRS. DUNBAR. I promised to send Tommy runnin', soon as the drawin's over.

JACK (*grinning*). That's good. (*Goes DLC to join other men. Women DRC beam at one another.*)

MISS BESSOM. Such a nice boy—Jack Wilkins.

MRS. WATSON. He's got his mother's looks and that's a blessin'.

MRS. DUNBAR. So many of the young ones seem to drift away. This place's gettin' smaller every year.

MISS BESSOM. I know it. Joe Summers

told me there's names on the r
MRS. DUNBAR. You
MRS. WATSON. Isn't
OLD MAN WARNER
from UR, crossing
have a greeting for
group DLC hails hi
DELACROIX. Well,
Warner, lookin
HUTCHISON. How
Warner?
WARNER. Not so l
Rheumatism c
MARTIN. How's it
citizen?
WARNER. You dor
complainin'.
HUTCHISON (*chuck*
Lotteries does
WARNER. I'm eig
Seen my first
figure it out.
DELACROIX. Nev
those years!
JACK. He hears
he?
DELACROIX. Oh
WARNER. And I'
few more!
JACK (*grinning*).
MARTIN (*calling*
Hear that? O
good for a fe
mur of approv
MRS. WATSON. H
them.
MRS. DUNBAR. I

told me there's less'n two hundred names on the registration this time.

MRS. DUNBAR. You don't mean it?

MRS. WATSON. Isn't that awful?

OLD MAN WARNER *has made a slow entrance from UR, crossing to C. The VILLAGERS URC have a greeting for him as he passes. Now the group DLC hails his arrival.*

DELACROIX. Well, here's old man Warner, lookin' spry as ever!

HUTCHISON. How're you feelin', Mr. Warner?

WARNER. Not so bad. *(Winks)*
Rheumatism comes and goes.

MARTIN. How's it seem to be the oldest citizen?

WARNER. You don't hear *me* complainin'.

HUTCHISON *(chuckling)*. How many Lotteries does this make?

WARNER. I'm eighty-one last November. Seen my first at the age of five. You figure it out.

DELACROIX. Never missed one in all those years!

JACK. He hears very good, too, don't he?

DELACROIX. Oh, he's a marvel!

WARNER. And I'll be comin' back for a few more!

JACK *(grinning)*. You tell 'em, old-timer!

MARTIN *(calling across to women DRC)*.
Hear that? Old man Warner says he's good for a few more! *(General murmur of approval from others on stage)*

MRS. WATSON. He's seen seventy-six of them.

MRS. DUNBAR. Imagine!

WARNER *(joining group DLC)*. Oh, you fellers ought to been here in the old days. Not like now. Lottery meant somethin' when I was a boy.

(BELVA SUMMERS has entered DL and stops just inside the entrance. She wears black, and carries some knitting with her, at which she works during the following action. She remains by herself, content to speak to no one.)

MISS BESSOM. Almost time to get started.

MRS. WATSON *(crossing up to RC and looking off toward UL)*. Guess we're goin' to, Miss Bessom. There's Joe Summers now, on the post office steps. *(MRS. DUNBAR and MISS BESSOM join MRS. WATSON at RC)*

MRS. DUNBAR. He's bringin' out the box.

MISS BESSOM. Where's his sister? She here?

MRS. DUNBAR *(nodding DL)*. There she is. Off by herself, as usual.

MISS BESSOM *(looking at BELVA, DL)*.
Beats me how he can stay so cheerful with that one to put up with.

MRS. WATSON. I'd hate to have her in my house.

(The murmur of the VILLAGERS swells. DICKIE and TOMMY have entered again from R. They start to C, see a stone and both grab simultaneously for it. They tussle with each other to gain possession of the stone.)

TOMMY. You didn't, neither! I seen it first!

DICKIE. You give that back!

TOMMY. The heck I will! *(Shoves him)*

DICKIE. Cut it out, will you? Watch who you're shovin'—(*There is a tussle again. MRS. DUNBAR comes forward and grasps TOMMY by the wrist.*)

MRS. DUNBAR. You stop that!

TOMMY. Leggo, Ma! I seen it first, honest!

MRS. DUNBAR. Never you mind. You got stones a-plenty! (*MRS. WATSON attempts to collar DICKIE, but he escapes to DLC.*)

MRS. WATSON. You come here to me. Wait till I get you home.

MARTIN (*sharply, to DICKIE*). Obey your mother. Mind what I say.

DICKIE (*dutifully*). Yes, Uncle Horace. (*Crosses to MRS. WATSON, unwillingly.*)

MRS. WATSON and MRS. DUNBAR move back to RC with TOMMY and DICKIE.)

JACK (*pointing off L with gesture of thumb*). Joe Summers is comin'. It won't be long now.

DELACROIX (*good-humoredly*). We'd better line up by families and wait for the bad news. (*VILLAGERS begin to shift and reassemble according to family groups.*)

HUTCHISON (*to DAVY*). Now, Davy, stick close to me. There's nothin' to be a-scared of. (*Leads DAVY URC*)

(*JOE SUMMERS enters UL, crossing to UC. He is carrying a large black wooden box and a wooden paddle. A townsman follows with a high stool, on which JOE places the black box in a dignified and solemn manner.*)

JOE. Thank you, Norbert. (*During JOE's entrance, there has been a growing murmur from VILLAGERS.*)

VILLAGERS (*ad libbing upon JOE's entrance*). Here he comes. Howdy, Mr. Summers.

There's the head man comin'. He's got the old black box. Howdy, Joe. Let's get goin'.

(*JOE takes a sheaf of papers from his hip pocket and places them on box. He pauses now to mop his forehead with a handkerchief. Most of the VILLAGERS are in small groups covering right half of stage and ULC. The remainder of the left side of stage is clear, except for BELVA, DL.*)

JOE (*brightly*). Little late today, folks. (*Waves to JACK*) Here, you! The Wilkins boy. Give me a hand and stir these names up. Stir 'em good and hard. (*JACK comes UC and stirs box with paddle, which JOE hands him. Then JOE turns to TOWNSMEN.*) Norbert, you hold it steady for him. Better use both hands. (*TOWNSMAN, using both hands to steady box, helps JACK with stirring business. JOE now finds his way to RC, checking over his lists as he does so. He notices BELVA DL, and moves toward her, passing others en route.*) How are you, folks?

VILLAGERS. Mr. Summers! Howdy, Joe. How are you? (*BELVA, occupied with her knitting, awaits him with an enigmatic smile. During scene which follows between JOE and BELVA, VILLAGERS converse in pantomime.*)

BELVA (*drily*). Almost ready, are you, Joe? Hope you haven't forgotten, and left my name out.

JOE. No, Belva. You're down there. I just been checkin' the list.

BELVA (*looking over his shoulder*). Oh, you got a long ways to go yet. A terrible responsibility. Everybody says so. (*Shakes head with mock sympathy*) Poor Joe Summers. Doin'

his duty. And with t
sister, too.

JOE (*grimly*). Well, if e
Belva, there must b

BELVA (*knitting as she t*
enjoy myself. Wat
man at work. Joe S
there runnin' thing
time and energy to
And how you love

JOE (*glancing over at v*
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BELVA (*smiling*). Why
asked you to come
me.

JOE. You might give
neighbors. . . .

BELVA (*contemptuousl*
If everybody was
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JOE (*turning away*).
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JOE (*grimly*). Well, if everybody says so,
Belva, there must be somethin' to it.

BELVA (*knitting as she talks*). I must say I
enjoy myself. Watchin' an important
man at work. Joe Summers—up
there runnin' things—devotin' all his
time and energy to civic activities.
And how you love it!

JOE (*glancing over at VILLAGERS*). You'd
oblige me, Belva, by lowerin' your
voice a little.

BELVA (*smiling*). Why should I? Nobody
asked you to come over and speak to
me.

JOE. You might give a thought to the
neighbors. . . .

BELVA (*contemptuously*). The neighbors!
If everybody wasn't so scared of
their neighbors, maybe we'd give
up some heathen customs that
don't make sense anymore. Half
the young folks growin' up don't
have the faintest notion what a
Lottery stands for.

JOE (*turning away*). Oh, what's the use
of talkin' to you! . . .

BELVA. There's no tellin' these days
where the wisdom stops and supersti-
tion begins.

JOE (*turning back to her*). The Lottery
has got to be taken serious. People
get set in a way of doin' things and
you can't change 'em. It's human
nature.

BELVA (*stops knitting, speaking softly, but
with intensity*). I don't like this town
nor anybody in it. But you're the
worst of 'em, Joe Summers. You

drove him away. Our own brother
and you drove him away.

JOE. It was more your doin' than mine.
You're the one brought him up to be
a weaklin' and a coward. You started
him goin' out on the street and
preachin' against tradition.

BELVA. You call that cowardly? It takes a
brave man to say what he thinks,
when every hand is against him.

JOE (*doggedly*). He left of his own
accord. I didn't send him.

BELVA. It takes real courage to fight
prejudice on your own doorstep.
(*With contempt*) It's you and the rest
of 'em that are the cowards.

JOE. Every day of my life I have to
listen to your craziness. If you
want to go off lookin' for him,
Belva, I'll give you the money. Take
the mornin' train. I'll even draw
alone in the Lottery from now on.
There—I couldn't offer more'n that,
could I?

BELVA. I'm not goin' anywhere. I'm
goin' to stay right here and wait.
(*Looks up and straight at him*) Because
sooner or later your name might
come up. I wouldn't want to miss
that day. (JOE turns away abruptly and
goes back UC. BELVA stands motionless
for a moment or two and then resumes
her knitting.)

JOE. All right, Jack, that's good
enough, I'm sure.

JACK. Glad to do it, Mr. Summers.

JOE (*to nearby WOMEN VILLAGERS*). Think
it's stirred enough, ladies?

MRS. WATSON (*chuckling*). Don't worry,
Joe. We trust you.

MRS. DUNBAR. Oh, Joe knows what he's doin' all right. (*General laughter from WOMEN VILLAGERS*)

WARNER. Hear those women hollerin' and cacklin'. They never would have stood for that in the old days.

DELACROIX. Seen some changes, ain't you, Mr. Warner?

WARNER. Bad enough to see Joe Summers up there crackin' jokes. Nobody shows respect for the ceremony. Just go through the motions nowadays. (*JACK has crossed to where WARNER is standing.*)

JACK. How was it different, Mr. Warner?

WARNER. Oh, it was *some* different. Everybody had to stand just so. And before the drawin', the head man spoke his piece real solemn-like. Had a regular recitation went with it.

HUTCHISON (*scanning VILLAGERS*). Now where in tarnation is my wife? (*Chuckle from those near him*)

MARTIN. Bill Hutchison lost his better half.

HUTCHISON (*to MRS. DUNBAR*). Hazel, you seen her?

MRS. DUNBAR. No, I ain't, Bill, and I been lookin', too.

MARTIN. Guess she ain't gonna make it.

MISS BESSOM. Late for the Lottery. Can you beat that?

HUTCHISON. I don't know what's got into the woman. (*Crosses to ULC, still leading DAVY by hand.*)

DELACROIX. That black box has seen a lot of service.

WARNER. Yessir. That box was here

afore I was born, and afore my father was.

JACK. Just imagine.

WARNER. Story goes it was made out of the pieces of the first box that ever was used.

DELACROIX. Makes you think, don't it?

WARNER. Goes way back to the days when they first settled down to make a village here.

JACK. Seems like we ought to be ready to build us a new one.

WARNER (*shocked*). No, boy! Don't say that. Not even jokin'.

DELACROIX. No, Jack. We don't want to upset tradition more'n we have to. Long as it holds together, we ain't gonna change it.

WARNER. I can recollect when they used to use wooden chips, 'stead of paper to write the names on.

JACK. What do you know? Wooden chips!

WARNER (*nodding*). I was real little, but I remember.

(*JOE has been busy checking his list, looking about and making notations on the sheets of paper. Occasionally he consults with one of the VILLAGERS close by him.*)

JOE (*raising voice*). Now, folks, I'm just about ready to declare this Lottery open. But you know how I always got this last-minute fussin' to do. Want to make sure the list is accurate—with all the heads of families and members of each household in each family.

MRS. DUNBAR. You go right ahead, Mr. Summers.



MRS. WATSON. Joe never m
yet.

(*TESSIE HUTCHISON, wearing her house dress, enters DR and RC.*)

MRS. DUNBAR. Why, Tessie been?

TESSIE. Clean forgot what (*Other women close by laugh*) Thought Bill was out ba wood. But I looked out and seen little Davy was remembered it was the enth—and come a-run dryin' her hands on her *speaks.*)

MRS. DUNBAR. You made i though. Joe is still chee

TESSIE. Seems like there' between Lotteries any

ore I was born, and afore my father
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Just imagine.

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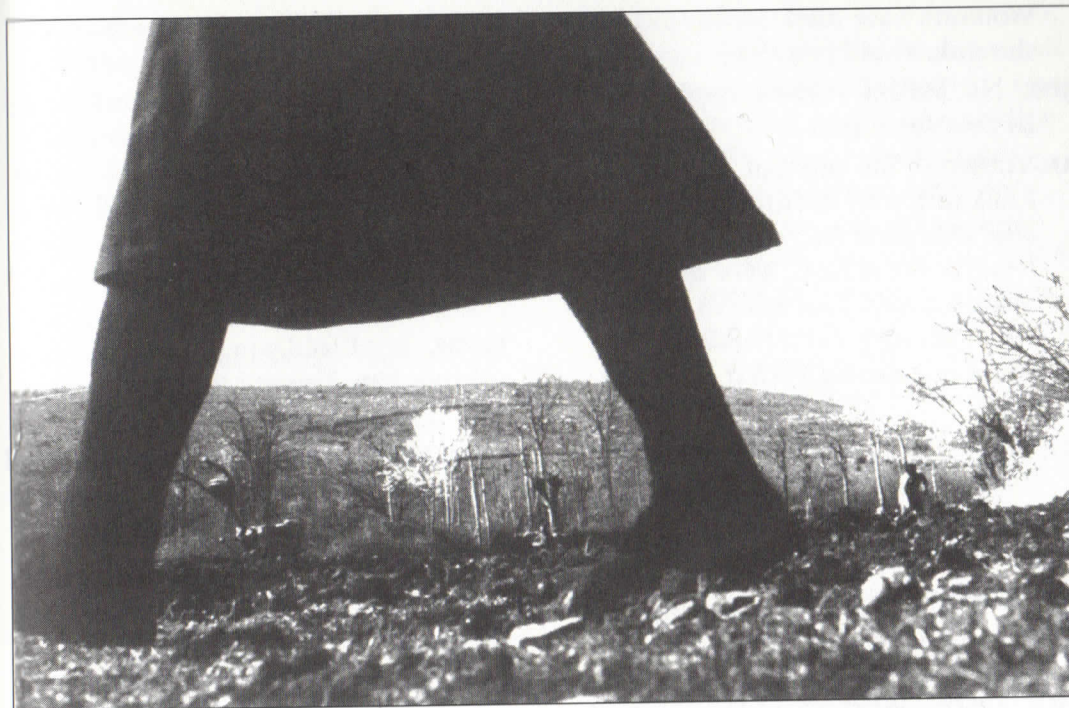
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DUNBAR. You go right ahead, Mr.
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MRS. WATSON. Joe never made a mistake
yet.

*(TESSIE HUTCHISON, wearing an apron over
her house dress, enters DR and crosses toward
RC.)*

MRS. DUNBAR. Why, Tessie! Where you
been?

TESSIE. Clean forgot what day it was.
(Other women close by laugh softly.)
Thought Bill was out back stackin'
wood. But I looked out the window
and seen little Davy was gone. Then I
remembered it was the twenty-sev-
enth—and come a-runnin'. *(She is
drying her hands on her apron as she
speaks.)*

MRS. DUNBAR. You made it all right,
though. Joe is still checkin' his list.

TESSIE. Seems like there's no time at all
between Lotteries any more. Seems

like we barely got through with the
last one.

MRS. DUNBAR. Time sure goes fast.

TESSIE (*glancing around*). Where's Bill
at? Oh, I see him. 'Scuse me, Hazel.
*(VILLAGERS make way for her as she
moves to join HUTCHISON ULC.)*

VILLAGERS. Hey, Hutchison! Here she
comes! Here's your missus, Bill!
Look, Bill! She made it after all!

TESSIE (*bending down, to DAVY*). Give
Mama a kiss. *(DAVY kisses her.)* That's
my good boy. *(Looks at HUTCHISON for
a moment. He smiles faintly and takes
her hand.)*

HUTCHISON. So you got here, did you?

JOE (*calling amiably*). Thought we were
goin' to have to get on without you,
Tessie.

TESSIE (*with forced pleasantness*).

Wouldn't have me leave my dishes in the sink, would you, Joe?

JOE. No, Ma'am. (*General ripple of laughter from VILLAGERS*)

HUTCHISON. You stay put, Dave, while I talk with your mother. (*DAVY joins other children at RC, as HUTCHISON brings TESSIE to DLC, where they talk somewhat apart from other VILLAGERS. He is not angry, but seems deeply concerned and worried.*) What ever kept you?

TESSIE. I don't know, Bill. I just wasn't thinkin', I guess.

HUTCHISON. That story's all right for the women. I know better. You knew the Lottery was today.

TESSIE. Well, it don't matter now. So long as I'm here.

HUTCHISON. What about Davy? Why'd you try to hide him?

TESSIE. Hide him? I didn't hide him. What makes you say that?

HUTCHISON. I found him in the stable loft. He said you told him to wait there—

TESSIE. Yes, but I was goin' to get him, Bill. I was goin' to bring him—honest.

HUTCHISON. What reason did you have to put him there?

TESSIE. Oh, Bill, he's such a little boy! And his birthday just last month. I hate to see the children takin' part in grown-up ructions before they've even put aside their toys.

HUTCHISON. I went through it when I was little.

TESSIE. I know, Bill. I guess I was born

and brought up with it, same as yourself.

HUTCHISON. Then how did you think you could get away with such a thing? You know Davy's name has to be there along with ours. And you know how careful Joe Summers is. Why, we'd have been a laughin'-stock in front of everybody.

TESSIE. But I told you I intended to bring him. You got to believe me, Bill.

HUTCHISON. Talkin' a lot of sentimental tommyrot. I always gave you credit for more sense than some of these other females. What's come over you lately, anyway?

TESSIE. I told you—nothin'.

HUTCHISON. Next thing you'll be sayin' we ought to give up Lotteries altogether—like poor Joe Summers' sister.

TESSIE. Well, I've not come to that yet. But some places have given them up. Lots of little towns up to the north—

HUTCHISON. No good'll come of it, either. You wait and see.

TESSIE. I don't say it will. No, I reckon the Lottery serves its useful purpose. When a custom's been handed down from generation to generation, there must be good in it.

HUTCHISON (*wagging head, grinning*). Then you shouldn't be so cussed busy, findin' fault. (*Crosses to RC with TESSIE, and DAVY joins them.*)

JOE (*clearing throat*). Well, now, guess we better get started—get this over with—so's we can get back to work. Anybody ain't here?

VILLAGERS. Dunbar! Clyde Dunbar ain't here!

JOE (*glancing at list*). Clyde that's right. He's broke he? Who's drawin' for l

MRS. DUNBAR. Me, I guess

JOE. Wife draws for husband have a grown boy to do Hazel?

MRS. DUNBAR. Ralph's not yet. Guess I got to fill in man this year. (*Mild ch LAGERS*)

JOE (*making note*). Right, you're drawin' this year

JACK (*blinking nervously*). drawin' for my mother

MARTIN. Good fellow, Jack your mother's got a m

JOE. Well, I guess that's a wink) Old man War

WARNER (*raising hand*). I

JOE (*nodding*). Knew you on box) All ready? (*W through VILLAGERS; the Everyone is quite serious no more laughter.*) Now the names—heads of and the men come paper out of the box paper folded in your lookin' at it until eve a turn. Everything cl are silent, but nervous lips, not looking around **JOE** reads from list.) A disengages himself from forward, reaches into takes out a folded pap Hi, Steve. (*Holding*)

VILLAGERS. Dunbar! Clyde Dunbar!
Dunbar ain't here!

JOE (*glancing at list*). Clyde Dunbar—
that's right. He's broke his leg, hasn't
he? Who's drawin' for him?

MRS. DUNBAR. Me, I guess.

JOE. Wife draws for husband. Don't
have a grown boy to do it for you,
Hazel?

MRS. DUNBAR. Ralph's not but sixteen
yet. Guess I got to fill in for the old
man this year. (*Mild chuckle from VILLAGERS*)

JOE (*making note*). Right. Jack Wilkins,
you're drawin' this year?

JACK (*blinking nervously*). Yessir. I'm
drawin' for my mother and me.

MARTIN. Good fellow, Jack. Glad to see
your mother's got a man to do it.

JOE. Well, I guess that's everyone. (*With
a wink*) Old man Warner make it?

WARNER (*raising hand*). Here!

JOE (*nodding*). Knew you would. (*Raps
on box*) All ready? (*Whisper runs
through VILLAGERS; then a hush follows.
Everyone is quite serious now. There is
no more laughter.*) Now, I'll read off
the names—heads of families first—
and the men come up and take a
paper out of the box. Keep the
paper folded in your hand without
lookin' at it until everyone has had
a turn. Everything clear? (*VILLAGERS
are silent, but nervous, wetting their
lips, not looking around or moving.*)

JOE reads from list.) Adams. (*A man
disengages himself from crowd, comes
forward, reaches into black box and
takes out a folded paper. JOE greets him.*)
Hi, Steve. (*Holding paper firmly, the*

*man goes back to his place and stands,
not looking down at his hand. JOE calls
next name.*) Allen. (*Another man comes
to box, repeating same business.*) How
are you, Mr. Allen? (*Now, as scene
continues, JOE continues to call out
names. Each time, someone comes for-
ward, reaches into box, takes out folded
piece of paper and returns to his place,
not looking down at hand holding
paper. As dialogue of VILLAGERS breaks
into scene, overlapping JOE's voice, call-
ing of the names becomes less distinct,
becoming sort of a muted background to
VILLAGERS' dialogue.*) Appleby . . .
Barrows . . . Burgess . . . Caswell . . .
Collins . . .

DELACROIX. They do say that over in
the north village, they're talkin' of
givin' up the Lottery.

WARNER. Pack of crazy fools! Listenin'
to the young folks—nothin's good
enough for *them*. Next thing you
know, they'll want to go back to livin'
in caves—nobody work any more—
live *that* way for a while.

DELACROIX. That's right, Mr. Warner.

WARNER. First thing you know we'd all
be eatin' stewed chickweed and
acorns. There's *always* been a
Lottery.

JOE. Dunbar . . .

MRS. WATSON. Go on, Hazel. That's you.

MISS BESSOM (*as MRS. DUNBAR crosses to
draw*). There she goes . . .

JOE. Foster . . . Graves . . . Hutchison . . .

MRS. WATSON. Where do they keep the
black box in between times?

MISS BESSOM. It varies. Sometimes one
place—sometimes another.

MRS. WATSON. I heard it spent one whole winter in Mr. Graves' barn.

MISS BESSOM. Another year, Clem Martin put it on a shelf in his grocery and left it set there.

MRS. WATSON. Yep. I recall that time.

JOE. Tatum . . . Townsend. . . Tuttle . . . Vincent . . .

MRS. DUNBAR (to TOMMY). I wish they'd hurry.

TOMMY. They're almost through, Ma.

MRS. DUNBAR. You get ready to run and tell Dad.

JOE. Warner . . . Howdy, Mr. Warner. (WARNER takes slip and returns to his place.)

WARNER. Got mine. Seventy-seventh year I been in the Lottery.

JOE. Watson . . . Hi, Myrtle.

MRS. WATSON (drawing). Hi, Joe.

JOE. Wilkins . . .

MISS BESSOM (as JACK crosses to draw). Don't be nervous, Jack.

JOE (kindly). Take your time, son.

JACK (drawing). Thanks, Mr. Summers.

JOE (checking off list). Now, that's all. (A breathless pause. JOE draws and holds up his hand with his slip of paper in it.) All right, fellows. (For a moment, no one moves; then there is a rustle as all the slips are opened.)

VILLAGERS (whispering). Who is it? Who's got it? Is it the Dunbars? Is it the Watsons? (Then, louder ad libs are heard, building to an excited climax.) It's Hutchison! It's Bill! Bill Hutchison's got it! Hutchison! (The HUTCHISONS break away from others and form a small group at LC.)

MRS. DUNBAR (excitedly). Go tell your father! (TOMMY takes a last awestruck look at BILL HUTCHISON, where he stands quietly LC, flanked by TESSIE and DAVE, then TOMMY runs out DR. HUTCHISON is staring at bit of paper in his hand. VILLAGERS are silent again, all eyes on HUTCHISON family.)

TESSIE (shouting suddenly). Joe Summers! You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair!

MRS. WATSON. Be a good sport, Tessie.

MISS BESSOM. All of us took the same chance.

HUTCHISON. You hush up, Tessie.

JOE. Well, everyone, that was done pretty fast, and now we've got to be hurryin' a little more to get done in time. (Consulting list) Bill, you draw for the Hutchison family. You got any other households in the Hutchisons?

TESSIE (shrilly). There's Don and Eva! Make them take their chance!

JOE (gently). Daughters draw with their husbands' families. You know that as well as anyone, Tessie.

TESSIE. It wasn't fair!

HUTCHISON. I guess there's just the three of us, Joe. Eva draws with her husband. That's only as it should be.

JOE. Then, as far as drawin' for families is concerned, it's you, and, as far as drawin' for households is concerned, that's you, too. Right?

HUTCHISON. Right.

JOE. How many kids, Bill?

HUTCHISON. Just the one. Little Davy

here. Bill, Jr., he a baby.

JOE. All right then. blank tickets back blank slips of paper from some of the vi the box, then. Ta in. (JACK does so.)

TESSIE (out of the en we ought to start she can) I tell you didn't give him t choose. Everybo (Appealing) Liste (JACK has stepped VILLAGERS have c and let them drop

JOE. Ready, Bill? (quick glance at h then nods.) Rem and keep them you has taken c tle Davy. (JACK t leads him to box. the box, Dave. (DAVY does so.) T hold it for him holds it carefully hesitates for a m defiantly, then s to box. She snat back to LC, and Bill . . . (HUTCH and brings out joins TESSIE. T and tense.)

MISS. BESSOM (br isn't little Davy whisper.)

WARNER (clearly).

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JOE. Then, as far as drawin' for families is concerned, it's you, and, as far as drawin' for households is concerned, that's you, too. Right?

HUTCHISON. Right.

JOE. How many kids, Bill?

HUTCHISON. Just the one. Little Davy

here. Bill, Jr., he died when he was a baby.

JOE. All right then. Jack, you got some blank tickets back? (JACK *holds up two blank slips of paper which he has taken from some of the villagers.*) Put them in the box, then. Take Bill's and put it in. (JACK *does so.*)

TESSIE (*out of the ensuing silence*). I think we ought to start over. (*As quietly as she can*) I tell you, it wasn't fair! You didn't give him time enough to choose. Everybody saw that. (*Appealing*) Listen, everybody! . . . (JACK *has stepped back from box. Other VILLAGERS have crumpled their own slips and let them drop to ground.*)

JOE. Ready, Bill? (HUTCHISON *takes a quick glance at his wife and son and then nods.*) Remember, take the slips and keep them folded until each of you has taken one. Jack, you help little Davy. (JACK *takes DAVY's hand and leads him to box.*) Take a paper out of the box, Dave. Take just one paper. (DAVY *does so.*) That's right. Jack, you hold it for him. (JACK *takes paper and holds it carefully.*) Tessie next. (TESSIE *hesitates for a moment, looking around defiantly, then she sets her lips and goes to box. She snatches out a paper, crosses back to LC, and holds it behind her.*) Bill . . . (HUTCHISON *reaches into box and brings out last slip of paper and joins TESSIE. The VILLAGERS are silent and tense.*)

MISS BESSOM (*breaking silence*). I hope it isn't little Dave. (VILLAGERS *begin to whisper.*)

WARNER (*clearly*). It's not the way it used

to be. People ain't the same way they used to be.

JOE. All right. Open the papers. Jack, you open little Dave's. (JACK *opens paper, holds it up, and a sigh of relief goes through villagers as they see that it is blank. JOE turns to TESSIE.*) Tessie . . . (*There is a pause. TESSIE does not move to open her slip of paper. JOE turns to HUTCHISON, who unfolds his paper and shows it. It is blank. JOE speaks to TESSIE in a hushed voice.*) It's Tessie. Show us her paper, Bill. (HUTCHISON *turns to TESSIE and forces her slip of paper out of her hand. It has a black spot on it. He holds it up. A murmur goes through VILLAGERS. JOE comes forward.*) All right, folks. Let's finish quickly. (JACK *carries black box, paddle and stool off UL and presently returns to rejoin VILLAGERS.*)

MRS. WATSON (*excitedly*). Come on, Hazel. Hurry up! Come on, Miss Bessom.

MISS BESSOM. I can't move as fast as I used to. (VILLAGERS *move downstage, some of them picking up stones as they come. DICKIE gives little DAVY a fistful of stones. As VILLAGERS shift about, TESSIE backs away, like a trapped animal, until she is alone at the center of a cleared space UC. VILLAGERS are grouped downstage at both sides of stage. Now, TESSIE holds out her hands in a desperate appeal, as VILLAGERS turn to face her and begin slowly to close in.*)

TESSIE. It isn't fair! It wasn't done fair!

HUTCHISON. Be quiet, Tess. We got to do this. (*Throws a stone, and TESSIE flinches, putting her hand to her brow.*) Come on. Come on, everyone. (DAVY

throws his fistful of stones. TESSIE utters a cry and sinks to her knees. VILLAGERS pantomime throwing stones.)

TESSIE. It isn't fair! It isn't right! (*Shields her face as VILLAGERS continue to throw stones at her. BELVA has crossed from DL to DR, thrusting JOE aside in passing. She goes out DR without looking at spectacle on stage. By now, VILLAGERS have hemmed in the victim, cutting her*

off from view. The clamor of voices builds, as does the ferocity of the stone-throwing.)

VILLAGERS. Come on! Get it over with! Hit her! That's the way! Hit her, everybody! Get it over! (*Lights dim out, and with darkness comes a low rumble of thunder. Voices of the VILLAGERS stop abruptly. Silence.*)

Curtain

Reader

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The Lottery

Reader Response

1. At what point in the play did you have an idea this was no innocent gathering? Explain.
2. Why do you think the stage directions indicate that this play takes place in a village square this year, the 27th of June, and not fifty years ago or more?
3. What do you think the lottery symbolizes?
4. How do you think the villagers should move as the stoning of Tessie Hutchison is played out? Why?
5. Write a news article for the local paper about the lottery of June 27th. Be sure to keep in mind that newspapers generally reflect the culture of their readership.

More About Shirley Jackson and *The Lottery*

"The number of people who expected Mrs. Hutchison to win a Bendix washer would amaze you." So said author Shirley Jackson only half jokingly about her short story "The Lottery," upon which this play was closely based. By story's end, it is quite apparent that a washing machine is the farthest thing from the mind of poor Mrs. Hutchison.

From the time it was first published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 1948 to the present, reaction to Jackson's story has ranged from awe to outrage. *The New Yorker* received hundreds of puzzled and abusive letters about the story, and the government of South Africa once banned it. Even today, there are schools that refuse to put this classic tale on their reading lists.

Creating and Performing

1. How would you characterize the following people? Write a short sketch of each:
 - a) Tessie Hutchison
 - b) Joe Summers
 - c) Old Man Warner
2. If you were cast as Belva Summers, how would you play her? Why?
3. With several classmates, pick a scene from the first half of the play and work on it together. Present it to the class.