\*\***The Lottery**\*\*

By Shirley Jackson

The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely, and the grass was richly green. The people of the village began to gather in the square, between the post office and the bank, around ten o'clock; in some towns, there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 26th. But in this village, where there were only about three hundred people, the whole lottery took less than two hours, so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning and still be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner.

The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play, and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones; Bobby and Harry Jones and Dickie Delacroix—the villagers pronounced this name "Dellacroy"—eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys, and the very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.

Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes. They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed. The women, wearing faded house dresses and sweaters, came shortly after their menfolk. They greeted one another and exchanged bits of gossip as they went to join their husbands. Soon the women, standing by their husbands, began to call to their children, and the children came reluctantly, having to be called four or five times. Bobby Martin ducked under his mother's grasping hand and ran, laughing, back to the pile of stones. His father spoke up sharply, and Bobby came quickly and took his place between his father and his oldest brother.

The lottery was conducted—as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program—by Mr. Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic activities. He was a round-faced, jovial man and he ran the coal business, and people were sorry for him because he had no children and his wife was a scold. When he arrived in the square, carrying the black wooden box, there was a murmur of conversation among the villagers, and he waved and called, "Little late today, folks." The postmaster, Mr. Graves, followed him, carrying a three-legged stool, and the stool was put in the center of the square and Mr. Summers set the black box down on it. The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool, and when Mr. Summers said, "Some of you fellows want to give me a hand?" there was a hesitation before two men, Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter, came forward to hold the box steady on the stool while Mr. Summers stirred up the papers inside it.

1. \*\*Setting\*\*: How does the setting (the clear and sunny morning, flowers blossoming, etc.) create a contrast with the nature of the lottery?

2. \*\*Character Actions\*\*: What does the children's behavior with the stones suggest about their role in the village's traditions?

3. \*\*Foreshadowing\*\*: Can you find any examples of foreshadowing in this section that hint at the story's dark conclusion?

4. \*\*Symbolism\*\*: What might the black wooden box symbolize? How does it contribute to the mood of the story?

5. \*\*Theme\*\*: What do you think the story says about the dangers of blindly following tradition?

1. **"Holes"** by Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnats was not a bad kid. The reason he was in the wrong place at the wrong time was not entirely his fault. His family had been cursed by a gypsy many years before. Because of this curse, Stanley was often in trouble, and when he was wrongfully accused of stealing a pair of sneakers, he was sent to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention camp.

At Camp Green Lake, there was no lake, just a dry, flat wasteland where the boys were forced to dig holes. The camp's warden claimed that digging the holes would build character. Stanley’s days were filled with monotonous digging, but he soon discovered that the camp held secrets, and these secrets might be the key to breaking his family’s curse.

Comprehension Questions:

Character Motivation: Why is Stanley Yelnats sent to Camp Green Lake? How does his family’s curse influence his life?

Setting and Plot: How does the setting of Camp Green Lake contribute to the overall mood and challenges faced by Stanley?

Themes: What do you think the novel says about justice and personal growth? How does Stanley’s experience at the camp reflect these themes?

Symbolism: What might the holes symbolize in the story? How do they relate to the characters and plot?

Activity: Write a short story about a character who discovers something unexpected while doing a seemingly mundane task. How does this discovery change their life?

2. "Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief" by Rick Riordan

Percy Jackson, a twelve-year-old boy, discovers he is the son of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. He learns about the existence of gods, monsters, and magical creatures in the modern world. When Zeus’s lightning bolt is stolen, Percy is accused of the theft and must embark on a quest to find the bolt and prevent a war among the gods. Along the way, Percy encounters various mythical creatures and learns about his own destiny.

Character Development: How does Percy Jackson react to discovering his identity as a demigod? What does this reveal about his character?

Mythological Elements: How does the author blend Greek mythology with the modern world in the story? Provide examples of how Percy interacts with mythological elements.

Plot and Conflict: What are the main conflicts in the story? How does Percy’s quest help resolve these conflicts?

Themes: What themes are present in the novel? How do Percy’s adventures highlight these themes?