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### The Analysis of “The Lottery” Short Story

People actually can get used even to the most unacceptable things, if they are approved by the society. “The Lottery”, a short story by Shirley Jackson, tells about such a phenomenon, which became accepted by the people due to some appeared long ago belief. Once a year by means of lottery, one person among the citizens was chosen to bring a sacrifice and be killed with the stones by the other people. Citizens believed that this ritual was an essential one, if they wanted to have a good harvest. However, nobody knew exactly how it worked. Thus, “The Lottery” shows the objective danger of unexamined belief.

The first detail, which may seem surprising, as well as, terrifying after finishing reading of the story is the people’s attitude to the lottery. They acted just like people who got used to that awful ritual and accepted it as a normal necessary tradition, due to some belief that it may bring good harvest. They were not scared and even “smiled rather than laughed”. For sure, everyone was afraid to “win” in the lottery, but still they did not show any panic: “most of them were quiet, wetting their lips, not looking around”. The panic reaction appeared only in the behavior of the winner, as a normal instinct to the approaching death: ““It isn't fair, it isn't right," Mrs. Hutchinson screamed”. Even though, some people considered the ritual to be a wrong tradition, mentioning “that over in the north village they're talking of giving up the lottery”, they never expressed those thoughts in an active way, as long as most people blindly believed that the tradition could not be abolished: “crazy fools”, “Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon”. They felt

no regret for the victim of the ritual and were just happy that they were not the ones chosen that year, but what was most awful, that even though they already did not remember the original peculiarities of the ritual, they remembered the main thing – killing: “Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones”.

Indeed, the people’s understanding of ritual is a specific one, but at the same time quite predictable. As any ritual, it used to have quite strict rules, most of which were forgotten or already ignored: “The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago”, “there had been a recital of some sort, performed by the official of the lottery, a perfunctory, tuneless chant that had been rattled off duly each year; some people believed that the official of the lottery used to stand just so when he said or sang it, others believed that he was supposed to walk among the people, but years and years ago this part of the ritual had been allowed to lapse”. It looked like people were not accepting it as a highly important act, but still followed it as a tradition or some holiday, which was conducted by the same man who conducted Halloween parties and the teen club. However, they still believed that the part with sacrifice was not the one to be corrected (for example, they could choose an animal instead of a human), which shows that perhaps, people even liked this part of the process, that the cruelty was in their nature. Still, though the story is a fictional one, remembering such historic events, as, for example Crusades, when a lot of people were killed for nothing, no surprise, that the appearing of such a ritual can be much possible in case someone will have enough arguments to support the belief in its necessity before it becomes a tradition. The tradition, which will not be easy to abolish, due to the fact people, getting used to something, are afraid of changes and indeed will prefer to adapt to a horrible ritual forgetting about morality, than risk to stop it scaring possible awful consequences.

For sure, people may get used and adapt to anything, changing and becoming sometimes much worse to survive, accepting the cruelty and forgetting about any moral aspects. Thus, here people lost any sensitivity to human death, a murder to be more exact, accepting it as a normal event: "lottery was conducted--as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program". They did not appreciate family bonds anymore supporting selfish moral principles and feeling no regret for the one of their relatives who was chosen, being glad instead, that they were not the chosen ones: "Nancy and Bill, Jr., opened theirs at the same time, and both beamed and laughed, turning around to the crowd and holding their slips of paper above their heads" . In fact, the ritual grew up generations who were not afraid to kill and considered such a cruelty an essential part of life lacking any morality about it; children did it since early age and threw the stones without any hesitation: "The children had stones already. And someone gave little Davy Hutchinson few pebbles."

The short story "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson actually makes the reader think about the possible danger of unexamined belief and the way it may influence on the society. Just like in the story, supporting such belief people may follow extremely awful traditions, being afraid of changes. These people adapt to horrible things and start to lack any morality and even family bonds, blindly following the tradition accepted by the society, becoming selfish and hypocritical, without any compassion or sensitivity to human death and life.

### Works Cited

Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery". 1948