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# The Lottery

Written by **Jeffrey Hatcher**  
Adapted from the short story by **Shirley Jackson**  
Directed by **Douglas Mercer**

Teacher Resource Guide  
by **Paul Michael Fontana**

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## Section 1: Introduction

Thanks for taking some of your classroom time to work on *The Lottery*! Although your students will enjoy the play without preparation, the experience can be deepened by some pre- and post-performance classroom work.

The exercises in this guide are intended to help you and your students get the most out of the workshop production. Please do not feel that you need to do everything in this guide! They provide a wide variety of drama-based teaching techniques that you can use as they are presented or you can adapt for your class or for other pieces of literature. You can experiment with them and add the ones that work for you to your “bag of tricks.”

The education programs of The Acting Company are intended to mirror the mission of the company itself: to celebrate language, to deepen creative exploration, to go places where theater isn’t always available. We try to use the same skills in our outreach programs that actors use in the preparation of a role. Many of the exercises here are adaptations of rehearsal “games” and techniques.

In addition to the Teacher Resource Guides for our performances, the Education Department provides week-long artist-in-residence experiences called **Literacy Through Theater**, Actor-driven **Workshops and Master Classes**, postperformance **Question and Answer Sessions**, teacher training workshops called **Partners in Education**, and a variety of specially-designed outreach programs for high school students, college students, and adults. We also provide **The Student Workshop Series**, a series of performance-based workshops for young theatergoers meant to introduce them to playgoing. This year, the play in this series is *The Lottery*.

If you need more information on any of these programs, please call Denise Bruxelles, Education Associate at 212-258-3111 or e-mail her at **DBruelles@TheActingCompany.org**. We wish to be of service to you and your students. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you. Enjoy the Show!

Paul Michael Fontana  
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## Section 2: Who was Shirley Jackson?

- **Overall Objective:** The students will know the facts of the life and career of Shirley Jackson and her work.

Cocoa? Cocoa! Damn miserable puny stuff, fit for kittens and unwashed boys.  
Did Shakespeare drink cocoa?

*The Bird's Nest*, Shirley Jackson

## Interviewing Shirley Jackson

### Objective:

- The students will learn about Jackson's life
- The students will read an article from a newspaper (The New York Times)
- The students will write interview questions based on Jackson's life.

### Selected Bibliography

*The Road Through the Wall*, 1948 (aka. *The Other Side of the Street*)  
*The Lottery, or, The Adventures of James Harris*, 1949  
*The Lottery*, 1950 (screenplay)  
*Hangsaman*, 1951  
*Life Among the Savages*, 1953  
*The Bird's Nest*, 1954 (aka. *Lizzie*)  
*The Witchcraft of Salem Village*, 1956 (J)  
*Raising Demons*, 1957  
*The Sundial*, 1958  
*The Haunting of Hill House*, 1959  
*The Bad Children: A Play in One Act for Bad Children*, 1959  
*We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, 1962  
*Nine Magic Wishes*, 1963 (J)  
*Famous Sally*, 1966 (J, post.)  
*Come Along With Me: Part of a Novel, Sixteen Stories and Three Lectures*, 1968 (published posthumously)

**Exercise:** Looking only at the titles of her works, what can the students infer about Shirley Jackson?

### New York Times Obituary

*Shirley Jackson*[December 14, 1916 – August 8, 1965], *Author of Horror Classic, Dies*  
 NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt., Aug. 9 – Shirley Jackson, the short-story writer and novelist, died at her home here yesterday afternoon after an apparent heart attack. She was 45 years old.

Miss Jackson was widely known as the author of "The Lottery," a short story published in 1948 that became a classic horror tale. In addition to stories dealing in abnormal psychology and witchcraft, she wrote novels of family life. Her most recent

book, "We Have Always Lived in the Castle," published in 1962 by Viking Press, is being adapted for the Broadway stage.

Miss Jackson was the wife of Stanley Edgar Hyman, the literary critic, who is on the faculty of Bennington College. She is also survived by four children, Laurence, of New York, Joanne, Sarah and Barry, of North Bennington; and two grandchildren. In accordance with a request Miss Jackson made some time ago, no funeral or memorial service will be held.

### **Domesticity and the Macabre**

Shirley Jackson wrote in two styles. She could describe the delights and turmoils of ordinary domestic life with detached hilarity; and she could, with cryptic symbolism, write a tenebrous horror story in the Gothic mold in which abnormal behavior seemed perilously ordinary.

In either genre, she wrote with remarkable tautness and economy of style, and her choice of words and phrases was unerring in building a story's mood.

Of all Miss Jackson's eerie and gruesome fantasies, "The Lottery," published in *The New Yorker* magazine, was the best known and most baffling to readers.

The dark and sinister story, opening on a quiet note, describes with mounting suspense, an annual village lottery to select a ritual victim to be put to death by stoning. The excitement is all in the selection of the woman's name from slips of paper in a black box.

The stoning itself is dispassionately cold-blooded. The magazine received hundreds of letters, virtually all of them demanding to know what the tale meant.

### **Housework Came First**

Was the stoning a parable of institutionalized fury? Was it an exposition of the cruelty of conformity? Was it a statement of the fundamental baseness of man? Or was it just a good chiller?

No one could say for certain. But other stories and novels of a similar kind gave the impression that Miss Jackson was at bottom a moralist who was saying that cruel and lustful conduct is not far below the surface in those who count themselves normal and respectable, and that society can act with inquisitorial torture against individuals it finds odd. The harmless eccentric, Miss Jackson appeared to say, could be damned and killed with the ferocity usually reserved for overt social enemies.

Because Miss Jackson wrote so frequently about ghosts and witches and magic, it was said that she used a broomstick for a pen. But the fact was that she used a typewriter – and then only after she had completed her household chores.

Although many writers profess a distaste for their craft, Miss Jackson was unusual in that she liked to write. "I can't persuade myself," she once said, "that writing is honest work. It's great fun and I love it. For one thing, it's the only way I can get to sit down." And there is pleasure, she went on, "in seeing a story grow." "It's so deeply satisfying--like having a winning streak at poker."

Miss Jackson believed in magic – both white and black – but looked deceptively tranquil and maternal. If one were looking for the witch in her, there was, of course, the broomstick that she wielded about the house and an assortment of black cats that sometimes numbered six.

"Fifty per cent of my life," she said, "is spent washing and dressing the children, cooking, washing dishes and clothes, and mending."

For all the disorganization and anticiness with which Miss Jackson liked to invest her household and herself, she was in true life a neat and cozy woman whose blue eyes looked at the world through light horn-rimmed spectacles. She was 5 feet 6 inches tall and inclined to pudginess. But the most notable thing about her was a voice full of laughter.

This sense of merriment came through in two books that dealt with her family life in North Bennington, where she had lived in an old and noisy house with her husband and four rambunctious children. These books were "Life Among the Savages" (1953) and "Raising Demons" (1957).

Deftly and artfully, Miss Jackson told of the perpetual pandemonium and the constant crises that accompany growing up. The mother, it seemed, was always the heroine. Orville Prescott, *The New York Times* critic, said that he had read "Life Among the Savages" "until I laughed so much the tears came to my eyes and I had to stop." Miss Jackson's sketches of domesticity were officially classified as nonfiction, but it is evident from a reading that their author could not resist embellishing a good story. The fiction, on the other hand, was an unburnished exercise in the sinister, which stemmed from her study of social anthropology and magic and her conviction that a witches' brew could be a powerful libation.

In that connection, Brendan Gill, the critic, who was a friend of Miss Jackson, said yesterday that she had considered herself responsible for an accident to an enemy by having fashioned a wax figure of him that had a broken leg.

Miss Jackson's Gothic romances--"Hangsaman" (1951), "The Bird's Nest" (1954), "The Sundial" (1958), "The Haunting of Hill House" (1959) and "We Have Always Lived in the Castle" (1962)--could be read as splendidly executed chill stories or as macabre commentary on human sanity.

From either approach, Eliot Fremont-Smith, a daily book critic for *The Times*, said yesterday, Miss Jackson "was an important literary influence."

"She was a master of complexity of mood, an ironic explorer of the dark, conflicting inner tyrannies of the mind and soul," he declared adding that "she left the flourishes – or rather, directed them – to the reader's imagination.

### **Wrote of Early Life**

Shirley Jackson was born in San Francisco Dec. 14, 1919, the daughter of Leslie Hardie and Geraldine (Bugbee) Jackson. She passed her childhood on the coast and made it the subject of her first book, "The Road Through the Wall" (1948). She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse University in 1940, was married to Mr. Hyman the same year and moved to Vermont.

Miss Jackson made her first appearance in *The New Yorker* in 1943 with a casual sketch, "After You, My Dear Alphonse," and for the next 10 years was a regular contributor of short stories.

According to her friends at the magazine, Miss Jackson's stories gestated for some time in her mind and subconscious before she put them down almost flawlessly in a first draft.

Aside from *The New Yorker*, Miss Jackson's stories appeared chiefly in *McCalls*, *Redbook*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

**Exercise:** Provide each student a copy of the *New York Times* obituary of Shirley Jackson above (a copy is found in the Reproducibles Section at the end of this Resource Guide). After everyone has read it, discuss what aspects of her life the students find interesting. How did the dual nature of her life mirror the dichotomy of the townspeople in *The Lottery*? Ask each student to look, again, at the obit of Jackson. Have them individually devise a list of 8-10 interview questions that they might ask her about her life.

As an extension, have a volunteer play Shirley Jackson and, with the help of the class, answer some of the questions on the other student's lists.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to look up Shirley Jackson at Find-a-Grave ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)) and examine the picture of Jackson. Why isn't there a picture of her grave? What happened to her body?

I took my coffee into the dining room and settled down with the morning paper. A woman in New York had had twins in a taxi. A woman in Ohio had just had her seventeenth child. A twelve-year-old girl in Mexico had given birth to a thirteen-pound boy. The lead article on the woman's page was about how to adjust the older child to the new baby. I finally found an account of an axe murder on page seventeen, and held my coffee cup up to my face to see if the steam might revive me.

*Life Among the Savages* (1953), Shirley Jackson

## Section 3: What to Look for in The Lottery

**Overall Objective:** The students will have an introduction to the world of *The Lottery* which was inspired by a short story by Shirley Jackson

### Brainstorm from the Title: Jackson' Short story

This exercise is designed to be used **BEFORE** seeing the play!

**Objective:**

- The students will explore the title of Jackson's *The Lottery*

**Exercise:** Have the students brainstorm a list of the types of characters, situations, emotions, themes, locations, and images they think might be included in a play called *The Lottery*. Write the list on newsprint. Post it before seeing the play

**Post Performance follow up:** Ask the students to create a poster or book cover for *The Lottery*. They can cut images out of magazines and newspapers or draw them. What words will they include and why?

### Characters in The Lottery

This exercise is designed to be used **BEFORE** seeing the play!

**Objective**

- The students will be familiar with the characters in the play.
- The students will make assumptions about characters based on their names.

**Exercise:** Write the following list for the class on the board. Discuss what the names makes us feel about them. (Possibly, the ordinariness of the names is meant to reflect the *perceived* ordinariness of the townsfolk.)

#### CHARACTERS in *The Lottery*

Mr. Summers

Tessie

Bill

Grace

Paul

Lisa

Debra

Bill Junior – Tessie & Bill's son (off stage)

Meredith – Tessie & Bill's daughter (off stage)

Tom – Debra's dead husband (off stage)

Arlene – Paul's ex-girlfriend (off stage)

Old Man Warner (off stage)

Clyde Dunbar (off stage)



## Choral Reading

### Objective:

- The students will read excerpt from *The Lottery*
- The students will create a Poem using the excerpt as inspiration

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the passage from *The Lottery* (a sheet with both excerpts it is found in the Reproducibles Section of this guide). Ask one student to read the entire passage aloud.

The morning of June 27<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Discuss the passage's surface meaning, use of literary devices, words that might be interesting to say aloud and odd words and phrases. Is it odd to have the verb "blossoming" modified by the adverb "profusely" (a word most closely associated with the verb "bleeding")? The author's references to statistics (times, dates, and numbers) might indicate how the Lottery is intended to go "like clockwork".

Divide the class into two groups (they can remain in their seats for this exercise) and ask volunteers to be Solo 1, 2, 3, & 4. Then read it using the soloist-group divisions as indicated. Have someone read the title as well. Remind them that they have to listen to one another and create a common value for the punctuation.

Solo 1: The morning of June 27<sup>th</sup> was clear and sunny,

Solo 2: with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day;

Solo 3: the flowers were blossoming profusely

Solo 4: and the grass was richly green.

All: The people of the village began to gather in the square,

Group 1: between the post office

Group 2: and the bank,

All: around ten o'clock;

Solo 1: in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 20<sup>th</sup>,

Solo 2: but in this village, where there were only about three hundred people,

Solo 3: the whole lottery took less than two hours,

Solo 4: so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning

Group 1: and still be through in time

Group 2: to allow the villagers to get home for  
All: noon dinner.

**Follow Up:** Using the quote as a base, the students will write a short Poem in free verse.

Each Poem must contain words or phrases from the original passage. Remind them of some of the literary devices they have studied (alliteration, repetition, metaphor, etc.) that you want them to use in their Poem.

Your class might enjoy working on breaking down another passage from *The Lottery* or a different short story by Jackson into a Choral Reading.

## Midsummer Madness and the “Dark Side”

**Objective:**

- The students will know the significance of the play’s setting (June 21<sup>st</sup>)
- The students will reflect on and create a drawing or physicalization of their own “dark side”
- The students will write an imaginary dialogue
- The students will know Freud’s concept of the id, the superego, and the ego

**Facts:** Shirley Jackson believed in the darkness within us. The townsfolk in *The Lottery* use the yearly lottery as a means of expressing and, in doing so, purging the dark side from themselves (at least until the next June 27<sup>th</sup>).

This day is among the longest and sunniest of the year. The summer solstice (21st June) is the actual day on which the sun climbs to its highest point in the sky. This was originally the day on which people celebrated midsummer. There is still a famous summer solstice celebration at Stonehenge, the ancient stone circle on Salisbury Plain in England. On the night before midsummer, a group of white-robed Druids gather at Stonehenge to watch the sun rising. Our play takes place on June 21<sup>st</sup>, the Summer Solstice, whereas the story is set on June 27<sup>th</sup>. In some places, people light fires on Midsummer Eve. They stay up until midnight to welcome in Midsummer Day, and, when the fires die down, men run or jump through the embers to bring good luck. Washing in the morning dew on Midsummer Morning is said to keep a woman young looking. Couples can increase fertility by running through the dew. Medicinal plants such as St. John’s Wort (named for St. John the Baptist, whose feast day is June 24<sup>th</sup>) are more potent during this time. Traditionally, almost all magic is more powerful at Midsummer. Is it any wonder that Shakespeare set his *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on Midsummer?

**Exercise:** The Midsummer festival is one where the rules of nature over-rule the rules of man. The yearly lottery is an event in which the townsfolk can express that which is normally repressed, their “dark side,” the “beast within.” Sigmund Freud proposed that our psyche is divided into three parts: the id, the superego, and the ego. The *id* is controlled by animal instinct: the needs and drives of the

body. The *superego* imposes rules and law through morals, and guilt. The *ego* acts as the mediator.

Discuss with the students why we keep some parts of ourselves “under control” or repressed. What do we fear from the “beast”? Why are children (as Shirley Jackson points out in some of her stories) freely able to express their inner beast?

Ask the students to silently reflect and identify where the repressed beast lives in their bodies. What sort of beast is it? Ask them to draw their beast on paper or ask the students to physicalize the beast, creating their inner self with their bodies. As the class interacts, in bestial form, rules like no touching other students and no human language are suggested.

When the drawing or physicalization is complete, ask the students to write a dialogue between their controlled, rational, external selves and their beast within. When all are done, volunteers can have theirs read by other students.

It has long been my belief that in times of great stress, such as a 4-day vacation, the thin veneer of family wears off almost at once, and we are revealed in our true personalities.

Shirley Jackson

## Tableaux: Blind Adherence to Rituals

### Objective:

- The students will brainstorm common rituals and evaluate them
- The students will create tableaux using the rituals as inspiration
- The students will discuss a passage from the short story

**Exercise:** In Shirley Jackson’s story, “The Lottery,” the townsfolk conduct a yearly lottery, a tradition linked to the social structure within the town.

Write the following categories across the top of the board: Personal, Social, Community, Religious, Academic, and Professional. Ask the students to list, in their notebooks, one or more examples of rituals or traditions that fall under each of these categories. When everyone has completed the task, ask for volunteers to share their suggestions and write them on the board under the appropriate headings. Discuss each answer as you write it on the board.

Introduce the idea of “tableau” to the class. Tableaux are living sculptures or frozen images made up of living actors’ bodies. Tell them that the poses they adopt in their tableau should be both easy to maintain for a few minutes (avoid one foot off the floor, for example) and easy to recreate.

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask each group to choose one of the student-suggested ideas on the board. Give them two or three minutes to create a tableau illustrating the ritual or tradition they have chosen. Circulate around the room, looking at the tableaux. After calling the groups together, have each group share their tableau and take suggestions from the rest of the group as to what they could be demonstrating.

After each group has taken a turn, have a full class discussion on the idea of rituals and traditions.

**Exercise:** Have a student read the following passage and discuss the value of the Lottery to the community:

“They do say,” Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, “that over in the north village they’re talking of giving up the lottery.”

Old Man Warner snorted. “Pack of crazy fools,” he said. “Listening to the young folks, nothing’s good enough for them. Next thing you know, they’ll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live that way for a while. Used to be a saying about ‘Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.’ First thing you know, we’d all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There’s always been a lottery,” he added petulantly. “Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody.”

What were the origins of the lottery in the town? Why have other towns considered getting rid of their Lotteries? Why does Warner want to keep it?

## Section 4: The Theater

**Overall Objective:** The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theater.

"The number of people who expected Mrs. [Tessie] Hutchinson to win a Bendix washer would amaze you"

Shirley Jackson  
regarding reader expectation of her short story, "The Lottery"

### Brainstorm: Creating a Theatrical Production

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will identify careers in the theater.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will know the collaborative nature of theater.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to name some of the people who work to put a theatrical production like *The Lottery* on stage. Write their answers on the board. As the brainstorm continues, present information about the various professions. When you attend the performance, see if your students can talk to some of the professionals associated with **The Acting Company**.

#### Producer or Producing Organization

The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production and make sure that the play sticks to their artistic standards. They often put together the package of Script, Director, Designers, and Cast.

**The Acting Company** is a not-for-profit organization, which means that money to produce the plays comes from fund-raising through grants and donations rather than from investors. [a "Not-for-Profit" organization uses money raised from donors, foundations, grants to do its work. A "Profit Making" or "For-Profit" organization gets money from investors. The investors receive a percentage of the profit made by the work.]

#### The Playwright

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement. Shirley Jackson the author of the short story *The Lottery* and Jeffrey Hatcher is the playwright who adapted her story his book for The Acting Company.

#### The Director

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director of *The Lottery*, Douglas Mercer, oversaw the actors in rehearsal with the help of the Stage Managers.

### **The Actor**

The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Many people call all the performers “actors” (instead of “actors” and “actresses”), since this is the professional term that applies to people of both genders. The members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They may have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways. They draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters. Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors had to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including some with costumes and props, before opening night.

### **The Stage Manager**

According to Carissa Dollar’s stage management website, “there is no single definition or job description for the tasks performed by the person who accepts the title of Stage Manager for any theatrical production.” However, according to Actor's Equity Association (AEA) *at least* the following duties: organizes all rehearsals, before or after opening; assembles and maintains the Prompt Book; works with the Director and the Creative Team to schedule rehearsal and outside calls; assumes active responsibility for the form and discipline of rehearsal and performance and is the executive instrument in the technical running of each performance; maintains the artistic intentions of the Director and Producer after opening; keeps any records necessary to inform the Producer of attendance, time, welfare benefits, etc.; and Maintains discipline.

### **The Staff and The Crew**

The theater staff - house manager, ushers, box office people, and others – assist the audience in many ways and support each performance. In a large-scale performance, backstage the Stage Managers and the running crew run the lighting equipment, move the scenery, and make sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect. In the office, Marketing people work to make sure people know about the performances and the Development staff makes sure the producers have money to put on the play.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to see how many of the members of the cast, crew and staff they can find at The Acting Company website:

**[www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org)**.

Feel free to have them correspond with the Company members through e-mail links.

## Casting

**This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will create a cast list for a movie of *The Lottery*

**Exercise:** Ask the students, “If you were casting a movie of *The Lottery*, what stars would you get to be in it?” In creating the play, Jeffrey Hatcher, the playwright, added specific stories for the townspeople like Tessie and Bill to “flesh out” the short story. Is that needed to create a film? While considering the film, where would each of the segments be filmed?

## Types of Theater Buildings

**This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will be able to identify different types of theaters.
- The students will weigh the benefits of each type of performance space.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will write a report about a theater.

**Discussion:** In which types of theaters have the students seen plays, concerts, or other live performances? In what type of theater was **The Acting Company’s** production of *The Lottery* performed? What might be the benefits of each type of performance space? What might be the drawbacks of each?

**Facts:**

Three different types of performance space are most common in the theater:

- **The Proscenium Stage** is the most common. The play is performed within a frame. The frame is called a proscenium arch; the audience looks through this frame as if the performance was a picture.
- **The Thrust Stage** extends into the audience. Spectators sit on three sides.
- **Theater-in-the-Round** has the audience sitting all around the stage. The action takes place on a platform in the center of the room. Another name for a Theater-in-the-Round is an Arena Stage because it is similar to a sports arena.

**Exercise:** At The Acting Company website, [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org), have the students find the “Itinerary” page. Many of the theaters that the Company is playing this year are linked to this page. The students can learn about different types of theaters in different parts of the country from these links. Students can write a report about one of the theaters where The Acting Company is performing this year. Their report might include a map of the location, distance from the last theater and to the next theater, and statistics about the theater (size, seating capacity, ticket prices).

"When I was a little girl I used to live in a world where a lot of other people lived too and they all lived together and things went along like that with no fuss... Look", she said, "Did there used to be words like psychosomatic medicine? Or international cartels? Or bureaucratic centralization?"

*Colloquy, Shirley Jackson*

## Still Images

### Objectives:

- The students will do a close reading of a passage from *The Lottery*
- The students will create tableaux based on images in the passage

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the following passage from the short story (a page with the passage can be found in the Reproducibles section of this guide). Ask nine students to each take one of the sections of the passage. Introduce the idea of "tableau" to the class. Tableaux are living sculptures or frozen images made up of living actors' bodies. Tell them that the poses they adopt in their tableau should be both easy to maintain for a few minutes (avoid one foot off the floor, for example) and easy to recreate.

Begin with each reader reciting his part in order so the class can get a sense of the whole passage. Break the class into separate groups by section, so in the end you have eight groups. The readers and the others in their group should prepare a series of still images to illustrate the passage. Allow them about five minutes for this process. Give a warning to the group when they have a minute left and ask the groups to rehearse what they are going to present to the class.

Reconvene the class as a whole and place them in a circle with a playing space in the center. Ask the readers to read the passages in order while the other members of each group present their tableaux. Follow the presentation with a discussion. You may wish to show the whole piece a second time before discussing.

from ***The Lottery*** by Shirley Jackson

1. The children assembled first, of course.
2. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them;
3. they tended to gather together quietly for a while
4. before they broke into boisterous play
5. and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands.
6. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones;



7. [They] eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys.
8. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys
9. and the very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.

## Theater Etiquette

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

### **Objective:**

- The students will know standard rules of behavior in the theater.

To make the theater-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct:

- Be on time for the performance.
- Eat and drink only in the theater lobby.
- Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat.
- If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

## Prepare for Q & A Session

This exercise is designed to be used **BEFORE** seeing the play!

### Objective:

- The students will create questions for the post-performance Q & A session

**Exercise:** To make the post-performance Question and Answer session more beneficial to everyone, the students might create a few questions before the performance. Ask the students to think what questions they might want to ask the actors in the play? Here are some starter questions:

Are there questions about the **theater** as an art form? Does it require training?

Where did the actors train? Can a person make a living in the theater? What careers are there in the theater? Are any of the students aspiring actors? Are they seeking advice?

Are there questions about **traveling** the country? Have the actors seen a lot of the United States? What is the bus like? How many hours do they spend on the bus? Does everybody get along?

What about life in **New York City**? How long have the actors lived there? And where are they from originally? (Have any of the students ever been in NYC?) What is the best part of living in New York? What is the worst?

What about **The Lottery**, the play? How has it been received in places across the country? What is the best part about working on this play? What have been its drawbacks? Is fun working on the set with all its trap doors and trick? What do the actors think the themes of the play are? How is working on an original play or a school-time performance different from a play by Shakespeare (which is a lot of what The Acting Company does)?

**NOTE:** If there are questions that your students have after the company departs, feel free to contact the Education Department of The Acting Company, and we will get an answer for you!

Let my reader who is puzzled by my awkward explanations close his eyes for no more than two minutes, and see if he does not find himself suddenly not a compact human being at all, but only a consciousness on a sea of sound and touch . . .

Shirley Jackson

## Section 5: What to Do After You See This Play

Please encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create: **The Acting Company, Box 898, New York, NY 10108 or fax 212-258-3299**. We have also included in the appendix short pre- and post-performance questionnaires, and would be interested in gathering data about the play.

### Write

- Write a play or scene in response to the play.
- Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
- Write a monologue for one of the characters in *The Lottery* (or someone mentioned in the play but not on stage).
- Write a review of our production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a Poem.

### Draw

- Draw the world of one or more of the characters.
- Draw images from the production.
- Draw a poster for our production of *The Lottery*.
- Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.

## Create a Performance of Sections The Lottery

Get a few copies of Jackson' short story *The Lottery* and distribute them to small groups of students. Have each group write a short play based on part of the short story (an image, a character, events before or after the story). The plays can be an adaptation of the source material, a reflection on the themes in the story, or whatever the students devise. Ask them to present their work to the other groups. Send us copies of the plays if you wish.

## View one of the Film Versions of the Story

The 1996 TV version with Dan Cortese, Keri Russell (*Felicity*), William Daniels (*St. Elsewhere*, *Boy Meets World*) bears little resemblance to the short story. There's also a 1969 version (part of the Encyclopedia Britannica's "Short Story Showcase") with a young Ed Begley Jr. (*St. Elsewhere*) which has been ranked by the Academic Film Archive "as one of the two bestselling educational films ever".

**The entire short story is available on-line at this website:**

<http://www.americanliterature.com/SS/SS16.HTML>

## **We Want to Hear from YOU and your STUDENTS!**

### **By Mail**

The Acting Company  
PO Box 898  
New York NY 10108  
**Telephone:** 212-258-3111  
**Fax:** 212-258-3299

### **By E-Mail**

Paul Fontana, Director of Education  
Pfontana@ TheActingCompany.org

Denise Bruxelles, Education Associate  
DBruelles@ TheActingCompany.org

Education@TheActingCompany

### **On the Internet**

[www.TheActingCompany.org](http://www.TheActingCompany.org)

### **Internships**

Please submit a letter of interest and your resume along with two references to the Intern Coordinator at the address above. You can call or check the website for more information.

### **Questionnaires and FREE Posters!**

You will find a Pre-Performance and a Post-Performance Questionnaires on the final pages of this guide. Please have your students fill out the Pre-Performance Survey before you begin working on exercises from this guide. Ask them to fill out the Post-Performance Survey after seeing *The Lottery*.

Send them to us at the above address and we will send you a POSTER from one of The Acting Company's productions as a "Thank You."

## Section 6: The Acting Company

The Acting Company, America's only nationally-touring classical repertory theater, was founded in 1972 by current Producing Director Margot Harley and the late John Houseman with a unique mission:

- By touring smaller cities, towns and rural communities of America, the Company reaches thousands of people who have few opportunities to experience live professional theater.
- By presenting superior productions of classic and contemporary plays, the Company builds a discerning national audience for theater, helping preserve and extend our cultural heritage.
- By providing continuing opportunities for gifted and highly-trained young actors to practice their craft in a rich repertoire for diverse audiences, the Company nurtures the growth and development of generations of theater artists.
- By commissioning and premiering important new works by America's foremost playwrights, the Company fosters a theater tradition in which story-telling, language and the presence of the actor are primary.
- By making the language of the theater accessible in performance, special classes and other educational outreach activities, the Company inspires students of all ages and helps them excel in every field of study.

The Acting Company has been fulfilling this singular mission since it was formed out of the first graduating class of the Juilliard School's Drama Division in 1972. Since then, it has traveled over 500,000 miles through 48 states and nine other countries, performing a repertoire of 77 plays for more than 2 million people.

### 2003 TONY Honor for Excellence in the Theater

In the professional theater, the highest honor one can achieve is to be recognized by the American Theatre Wing with an Antoinette Perry Award, called the "Tony"®. This year, The Acting Company was presented with a special Tony Honor celebrating our 30 years touring America with classical plays and newly commissioned works. Thank you for celebrating with us!

To learn more about the Tony Awards, go to the Tony website: [www.tonys.org](http://www.tonys.org).

### Trace Our Tour

If the students want to follow the tour as it progresses across the United States, they can read the Tour Journal (on our website [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org)) and see pictures of the places we visit. You can check in with us every day, check the itinerary, and see where we are on the map.

## Section 7: Cast List and Information

**THE ACTING COMPANY**  
In  
**Shirley Jackson's**  
**THE LOTTERY**  
by **Jeffrey Hatcher**  
Directed by **Douglas Mercer**

Production Stage Manager – **Michaella McCoy**  
Stage Manager – **Michele Harms**  
Costume Designer – **Wendy Samland**  
Stage management Intern – **Devan Hibbard**

### **CAST**

*(in order of appearance)*

**Mr. Summers**.....**Spencer Aste**  
**Tessie**.....**Carine Montbertrand**  
**Bill**.....**Timothy Carter**  
**Grace**.....**Megan McQuillan**  
**Paul**.....**Keith Eric Chapelle**  
**Lisa**.....**Deb Heinig**  
**Debra**.....**Kaitlin O'Neal**

## Appendix: Reproducibles

For use with **Interviewing Shirley Jackson**

### **New York Times Obituary**

*Shirley Jackson* [December 14, 1916 – August 8, 1965], *Author of Horror Classic, Dies*

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt., Aug. 9 – Shirley Jackson, the short-story writer and novelist, died at her home here yesterday afternoon after an apparent heart attack. She was 45 years old.

Miss Jackson was widely known as the author of "The Lottery," a short story published in 1948 that became a classic horror tale. In addition to stories dealing in abnormal psychology and witchcraft, she wrote novels of family life. Her most recent book, "We Have Always Lived in the Castle," published in 1962 by Viking Press, is being adapted for the Broadway stage.

Miss Jackson was the wife of Stanley Edgar Hyman, the literary critic, who is on the faculty of Bennington College. She is also survived by four children, Laurence, of New York, Joanne, Sarah and Barry, of North Bennington; and two grandchildren. In accordance with a request Miss Jackson made some time ago, no funeral or memorial service will be held.

### **Domesticity and the Macabre**

Shirley Jackson wrote in two styles. She could describe the delights and turmoils of ordinary domestic life with detached hilarity; and she could, with cryptic symbolism, write a tenebrous horror story in the Gothic mold in which abnormal behavior seemed perilously ordinary.

In either genre, she wrote with remarkable tautness and economy of style, and her choice of words and phrases was unerring in building a story's mood.

Of all Miss Jackson's eerie and gruesome fantasies, "The Lottery," published in *The New Yorker* magazine, was the best known and most baffling to readers.

The dark and sinister story, opening on a quiet note, describes with mounting suspense, an annual village lottery to select a ritual victim to be put to death by stoning. The excitement is all in the selection of the woman's name from slips of paper in a black box.

The stoning itself is dispassionately cold-blooded. The magazine received hundreds of letters, virtually all of them demanding to know what the tale meant.

### **Housework Came First**

Was the stoning a parable of institutionalized fury? Was it an exposition of the cruelty of conformity? Was it a statement of the fundamental baseness of man? Or was it just a good chiller?

No one could say for certain. But other stories and novels of a similar kind gave the impression that Miss Jackson was at bottom a moralist who was saying that cruel and lustful conduct is not far below the surface in those who count themselves normal and respectable, and that society can act with inquisitorial torture against individuals it finds odd. The harmless eccentric, Miss Jackson appeared to say, could be damned and killed with the ferocity usually reserved for overt social enemies.

Because Miss Jackson wrote so frequently about ghosts and witches and magic, it was said that she used a broomstick for a pen. But the fact was that she used a typewriter – and then only after she had completed her household chores.

Although many writers profess a distaste for their craft, Miss Jackson was unusual in that she liked to write. "I can't persuade myself," she once said, "that writing is honest work. It's great fun and I love it. For one thing, it's the only way I can get to sit down." And there is pleasure, she went on, "in seeing a story grow." "It's so deeply satisfying--like having a winning streak at poker."

Miss Jackson believed in magic – both white and black – but looked deceptively tranquil and maternal. If one were looking for the witch in her, there was, of course, the broomstick that she wielded about the house and an assortment of black cats that sometimes numbered six.

"Fifty per cent of my life," she said, "is spent washing and dressing the children, cooking, washing dishes and clothes, and mending."

For all the disorganization and anticness with which Miss Jackson liked to invest her household and herself, she was in true life a neat and cozy woman whose blue eyes looked at the world through light horn-rimmed spectacles. She was 5 feet 6 inches tall and inclined to pudginess. But the most notable thing about her was a voice full of laughter.

This sense of merriment came through in two books that dealt with her family life in North Bennington, where she had lived in an old and noisy house with her husband and four rambunctious children. These books were "Life Among the Savages" (1953) and "Raising Demons" (1957).

Deftly and artfully, Miss Jackson told of the perpetual pandemonium and the constant crises that accompany growing up. The mother, it seemed, was always the heroine. Orville Prescott, *The New York Times* critic, said that he had read "Life Among the Savages" "until I laughed so much the tears came to my eyes and I had to stop." Miss Jackson's sketches of domesticity were officially classified as nonfiction, but it is evident from a reading that their author could not resist embellishing a good story. The fiction, on the other hand, was an unburnished exercise in the sinister, which stemmed from her study of social anthropology and magic and her conviction that a witches' brew could be a powerful libation.

In that connection, Brendan Gill, the critic, who was a friend of Miss Jackson, said yesterday that she had considered herself responsible for an accident to an enemy by having fashioned a wax figure of him that had a broken leg.

Miss Jackson's Gothic romances--"Hangsaman" (1951), "The Bird's Nest" (1954), "The Sundial" (1958), "The Haunting of Hill House" (1959) and "We Have Always Lived in the Castle" (1962)--could be read as splendidly executed chill stories or as macabre commentary on human sanity.

From either approach, Eliot Fremont-Smith, a daily book critic for *The Times*, said yesterday, Miss Jackson "was an important literary influence."

"She was a master of complexity of mood, an ironic explorer of the dark, conflicting inner tyrannies of the mind and soul," he declared adding that "she left the flourishes – or rather, directed them – to the reader's imagination.

### **Wrote of Early Life**



Shirley Jackson was born in San Francisco Dec. 14, 1919, the daughter of Leslie Hardie and Geraldine (Bugbee) Jackson. She passed her childhood on the coast and made it the subject of her first book, "The Road Through the Wall" (1948). She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse University in 1940, was married to Mr. Hyman the same year and moved to Vermont.

Miss Jackson made her first appearance in *The New Yorker* in 1943 with a casual sketch, "After You, My Dear Alphonse," and for the next 10 years was a regular contributor of short stories.

According to her friends at the magazine, Miss Jackson's stories gestated for some time in her mind and subconscious before she put them down almost flawlessly in a first draft.

Aside from *The New Yorker*, Miss Jackson's stories appeared chiefly in *McCalls*, *Redbook*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *The Ladies' Home Journal*.

For use with **Characters** in *The Lottery*, p. 8

## **CHARACTERS** in *The Lottery*

**Mr. Summers**

**Tessie**

**Bill**

**Grace**

**Paul**

**Lisa**

**Debra**

**Bill Junior – Tessie & Bill's son (off stage)**

**Meredith – Tessie & Bill's daughter (off stage)**

**Tom – Debra's dead husband (off stage)**

**Arlene – Paul's ex-girlfriend (off stage)**

**Old Man Warner (off stage)**

**Clyde Dunbar (off stage)**

For use with **Choral Reading**, pp. 9-10

The morning of June 27<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 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\*.

\*dinner = lunch

Solo 1: The morning of June 27<sup>th</sup> was clear and sunny,  
 Solo 2: with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day;  
 Solo 3: the flowers were blossoming profusely  
 Solo 4: and the grass was richly green.

All: The people of the village began to gather in the square,  
 Group 1: between the post office  
 Group 2: and the bank,  
 All: around ten o'clock;

Solo 1: in some towns there were so many people that the  
           lottery took two days and had to be started on June 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Solo 2: but in this village, where there were only about three  
           hundred people,  
 Solo 3: the whole lottery took less than two hours,  
 Solo 4: so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning  
 Group 1: and still be through in time  
 Group 2: to allow the villagers to get home for  
 All: noon dinner.

For use with **Tableaux: Blind Adherence to Rituals**, pp. 11-12

“They do say,” Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, “that over in the north village they’re talking of giving up the lottery.”

Old Man Warner snorted. “Pack of crazy fools,” he said. “Listening to the young folks, nothing’s good enough for them. Next thing you know, they’ll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live that way for a while. Used to be a saying about ‘Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.’ First thing you know, we’d all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There’s always been a lottery,” he added petulantly. “Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody.”

For use with **Still Images**, pp. 16-17

from ***The Lottery*** by Shirley Jackson

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

For use with **Theater Etiquette**, pp. 17-18

## **Theater Etiquette**

To make the theater-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct which are still in force when the performance is at your school:

- Be on time for the performance.
- Eat and drink only in the theater lobby.
- Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat.
- Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience

## Pre-Performance Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "5" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I feel excited about seeing *The Lottery*.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

I have been to see plays before.

**None**

**Some**

**Many**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**What are some plays you have seen?**

Theater is fun!

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Seeing a play can teach me about life.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

Student Initials:

## Post-Performance Questionnaire

After seeing *The Lottery*, please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "5" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I enjoyed seeing *The Lottery*.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

*The Lottery* was better than other plays I have seen before.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

**I have  
never  
seen a  
play.**

I want to see more theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

Seeing *The Lottery* taught me something about life.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

**Some Lessons in *The Lottery* are:**

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1

2

3

4

5

**Comments:**

Student Initials: