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...lives are puzzled by the final shock to experience at the end of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," its purpose and effect: they feel they are "only (left) shaken up" with "a sense of an unclosed gap" (Heilmann, 1974: 385). In fact their major concern seems to be with the anthropological allusions to the rituals of the summer solstice. Seymour Loric claims that "anthropology provides the chief symbol" so that the lottery is to be understood as a "modern representation of the primitive annual scapegoat rite" (1954). Brooks and Warren explain that the story reveals "the all-too-human tendency to seize upon a scapegoat" (1971: 74) which Virgil Scott voices as "the human tendency to 'punish' innocent and often accidentally chosen victims for our sins" (1968: 20). If these comments are to the point they nevertheless do not disclose how the remarkable reversal of expectations is anticipated. True Helen E. Nebeker throws light on the author's "symbolic turn of force" (1971: 100-107), but then only partially. Indeed she focuses on the underlying theme—the role of tradition in man's life—but fails to consider the symbolism prevailing in the main theme—man's recurrent need of a victim. Yet symbols are Jackson's major device in her tightly-knit handling of both themes. By Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University) "The Lottery" is a famous 1948 short story of the American writer Shirley Jackson. The story focuses on a village where an annual lottery is drawn, with the fate of the person who draws the "winning" slip only revealed at the end of the story. Jackson's story is about a dark side to human behaviour which had become fully exposed during the horrors of the 1940s, especially in Europe. In "The Lottery," Jackson uses the story to explore a dark side of human nature, a side that is often hidden away from public view. The story is set in a small town in the United States, where the lottery is a tradition that has been passed down for generations. The story is a critique of the human tendency to follow tradition blindly, even when it leads to violence and death. The story is a warning to the reader to question the traditions that we follow, and to consider the consequences of our actions. The story is a powerful statement about the human condition, and it is a story that has resonated with readers for decades. The story is a masterpiece of American literature, and it is a story that should be read by everyone. The story is a warning to the reader to question the traditions that we follow, and to consider the consequences of our actions. The story is a powerful statement about the human condition, and it is a story that has resonated with readers for decades. The story is a masterpiece of American literature, and it is a story that should be read by everyone.