

December 5, 2025

Dear Shirley Jackson,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Sophia, and I read your short story "The Lottery." I was required to read and analyze the short story because we were working on the horror genre for my Eighth Grade Honors ELA class. Almost immediately, I noticed how this wasn't just an average reading experience. As I looked over it and did assignments on it, I actually saw a few details that made an impact on me and changed the way I think. Also, I might have just found my new favorite author! Overall, I was shocked, inspired, and influenced.

So, what shocked me the most was how fast the setting changed; for example, it all went from "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.", to "Mrs. Hutchinson screamed and then they were upon her." This showed me that bad things can hide beneath what seems to be normal. I was also left a bit confused, yet it just added even more of a unique twist to this great narrative.

I was truly inspired by the overall theme of this short story which was about blindly following a tradition that has lost its meaning. Once I saw this message, I immediately thought of how good it could be in the stories that I like to write on my own time! For instance, I love to write dystopian novels. The dystopian genre and the idea of a tradition being obviously and carelessly followed fits perfectly with a story that I would enjoy writing. Mrs. Hutchinson volunteering to go for her husband reminded me of *The Hunger Games*. Most of us know about how Katniss Everdeen had to volunteer as tribute for Primrose Everdeen. I really just feel like the concept of suspense, shock, tragedy, and puzzlement in a story is so inspirational to me. I believe that something shouldn't continue just to continue.

Although this tale was fictional, I was actually greatly influenced by some of the messages included in it. For instance, when Old Man Warner says “There’s always been a lottery” when he knows that the true meaning has been lost, it really got me thinking. What I mean by thinking is, maybe I have some personal things in my life right now that I don’t need but don’t get rid of simply because the comfort of the routines blinds me of what I really need to do. Not only that, but am I really aware of the world in general that is all around me? For example, I have a few friends that cause drama, but they weren’t always like this. I have lost my important reason for why I am their friend, so why pursue friends who may not positively influence me? Well, it might just be since I’m so used to being their friend and don’t want to let go. Just like the villagers never questioning if the practice was right, do I ever wonder if I am being treated fairly and positively? Next, when the children are gathering their stones and getting ready for the ritual, a neighbor is giving “little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles” which reveals how mindless people can be about situations that are very negative and tragic. There is such a violent event happening, yet children are allowed to participate and it is all so normalized. So this actually influenced me by making me think if the things that I do are really fair and if I should even continue them.

To end this letter, I just wanted to thank you for making such a great story that has such a powerful meaning. Some people may never understand how unaware they are of the world around them, and if they actually try to understand and look over this narrative, it could open their eyes like it did mine. In addition to my perspectives being changed, I have new ideas for upcoming writing that I will be doing. Hopefully one day I can become an author and share my way of presenting the messages that you have in my own way. The setting, characters, plot, theme, and more will stay in my mind for a very long time. I am so excited to see how my life can really change for the better after analyzing this fictional writing.

Sincerely,

Sophia Laubach