

## Foreshadowing in “The Lottery”

Authors use the common literary device of foreshadowing to build suspense towards something that will occur in the story. In “The Lottery” the author foreshadows the story’s ending in many different ways. Three main ways the author employs the literary device of foreshadowing are by the excessive mention of the kids in the story, the amount of times the community has executed the lottery, and the importance of the papers that choose which family will get stoned to death. Throughout the story, the author foreshadows the ending of the story to create a tense and suspenseful mood for the reader.

The author of “The Lottery” foreshadows many times with the excessive mention of the kids being part of the process of getting ready for the lottery. It is the beginning of the lottery and everyone is getting ready for the stoning, even the kids. We learn: “Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones.” (1) Usually in a normal lottery only adults participate, but in this lottery kids prepare for it, they throw the stones, and even have a chance of being picked. The kids are making sure that they choose the smoothest and roundest stones for ample accuracy when stoning the people. Additionally, the kids have to kill someone before they can go have fun for the summer. If kids also participate in this lottery they can’t be in school: “School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them...” (1) Without the kids at the lottery it wouldn’t be the same. In a normal school kids finish school for the year and go straight to camp or activities without anything in their way. For the kids in this community after they finish for the year they have to kill somebody before they can go have their fun. Having the kids being part of the whole process puts a reader in a different mood, and suggests that something is weird is going to happen at the end of the story.

The author foreshadows that this is a somber lottery because of how ritualistic and familiar it seems after having done it so many times. It is the beginning of the lottery and Mr. Summers just wants to get the lottery over with. Mr. Summers said with a serious tone: “Guess we better get started, get this over with, so’s we can go back to work. Anybody ain’t here?” (2) Usually a lottery caller never wants a regular lottery to end because it is very fun. Mr. Summers’

tone hints that he just wants to get it over with and go back to his normal life. His tone foreshadows that this lottery is not a normal lottery. The lottery is the community's second nature and is very simple for them to accomplish. Normally people get excited for a lottery because it isn't a normal thing for them. In this community everybody has done it so many times that it just isn't exciting because they know how to do it so well. The narrator describes: "The people had done it so many times that they only half listened to the directions... Then Mr. Summers raised one hand high." (3) Because the community has done the lottery so many times, it foreshadows that it's not a normal lottery, and by not being a normal lottery it tenses the reader's mood while reading the story.

Another way the author foreshadows the end of the story is by the importance of the papers in choosing who will be stoned. Most of the people at the the lottery have been called up and have gotten their papers, the narrator states: "By now, all through the crowd there were men holding the small folded papers in their large hand, tuning them over and over nervously." (3) If the men flip over a paper with a black dot, it means that their family gets stoned. The people appear to be nervous when they are holding the papers, because the paper they are holding could have the life ending black dot. Once everyone has gotten their papers and it is time to see who has the dot, the narrator says: "After that, there was a long pause, a breathless pause ... For a minute, no one moved, and then all the slips of paper were opened." (4) When everyone is turning over their pieces of paper there is a long pause where nobody speaks, steps, or breathes, all being scared that the dot is on the side of the family's paper. The author hints that there is something scary about the papers with dots and also foreshadows to an awful ending.

The author of "The Lottery" creates a tense and suspenseful mood for the reader by using the literary device, foreshadowing. The excessive mention of the kids in the story, the amount of times the community does the lottery every year, and the importance of the papers that chooses which family will get stones to death are all great examples of foreshadowing in "The Lottery". BY using this literary device, the author creates a tense and suspenseful mood for the reader, making the reader want to know the ending of the story.