

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETIVE WORK

STUDENT READER



GRADE 7

Introduction to Argument:
Writing About Literature

Grade 7

Introduction to Interpretive Work



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STUDENT READER

Contents

Biographical Sketch: Langston Hughes	1
Thank You M'am	3
Biographical Sketch: Shirley Jackson	11
The Lottery	13

Biographical Sketch

Langston Hughes

(1901-1967)

Langston Hughes was an American poet, essayist, novelist, playwright, and activist, perhaps best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance—an intellectual, cultural, and artistic movement centered around the African-American neighborhood of Harlem, New York, in the 1920s.

A child of divorced parents, Hughes spent his early childhood with his grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas. As he writes in his autobiography, *The Big Sea*, it was during this time that “I began to believe in nothing but books and the wonderful world in books—where if people suffered, they suffered in beautiful language, not in monosyllables, as we did in Kansas.”

After his grandmother’s death, Hughes attended high school in Cleveland, Ohio, where, noticing his interest in writing, a teacher introduced

Introduction to Interpretive Work

him to the poetry of Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg, both of whom Hughes cites as influences on his work. Shortly after high school, his first published poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” caught the eye and praise of literary critics.

Hughes went on to graduate from Lincoln University, a historically black university, and travelled widely to destinations as varied as South America, West Africa, and Europe—writing all the while.

In addition to poems, novels, plays, and a weekly newspaper column, Hughes published numerous short stories. “Thank You, M’am,” the story you will read in this unit, is one of his most famous.

Hughes’ ashes are interred beneath the floor of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem along with the inscription “My soul has grown deep like the rivers” —a line from his first published poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.”

Thank You M'am

Langston Hughes

"Thank You, M'am" from SHORT STORIES by Langston Hughes.
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1 She was a large woman with a large purse that
had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had
a long strap, and she carried it slung across her
shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and
5 she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind
her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke
with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But
the boy's weight and the weight of the purse com-
bined caused him to lose his balance so, instead of
10 taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell
on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up.
The large woman simply turned around and kicked
him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she

Introduction to Interpretive Work

reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front,
15 and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocket-
book, boy, and give it here." She still held him. But
she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and
pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you
20 ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said,
"Yes'm."

The woman said, "What did you want to do it
for?"

25 The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You a lie!"

By that time two or three people passed,
stopped, turned to look, and some stood watching.

"If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the
30 woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman.
She did not release him.

"I'm very sorry, lady, I'm sorry," whispered the
35 boy.

"Um-hum! And your face is dirty. I got a great
mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got
nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

Thank You M'am

40 "Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.

He looked as if he were fourteen or fifteen, frail and willow-wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

45 The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose."

50 "Was I bothering you when I turned that corner?" asked the woman.

"No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with me," said the woman. "If you think that that contact is not going to last awhile, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

60 Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street. When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette-furnished room at the rear of the house. She
65 switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking

in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone.

70 The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, "What is your name?"

"Roger," answered the boy.

75 "Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face," said the woman, whereupon she turned him loose—at last.

Roger looked at the door—looked at the woman—looked at the door—and went to the sink.

80 "Let the water run until it gets warm," she said. "Here's a clean towel."

"You gonna take me to jail?" asked the boy, bending over the sink.

85 "Not with that face, I would not take you nowhere," said the woman. "Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bite to eat and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe, you ain't been to your supper either, late as it be. Have you?"

"There's nobody home at my house," said the boy.

90 "Then we'll eat," said the woman, "I believe you're hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pocketbook."

"I wanted a pair of blue suede shoes," said the boy.

Thank You M'am

95 “Well, you didn’t have to snatch my pocket-
book to get some suede shoes,” said Mrs. Luella
Bates Washington Jones. “You could of asked me.”
 “M’am?”

 The water dripping from his face, the boy
100 looked at her. There was a long pause. A very long
pause. After he had dried his face and not know-
ing what else to do dried it again, the boy turned
around, wondering what next. The door was open.
He could make a dash for it down the hall. He
105 could run, run, run, run, run!

 The woman was sitting on the day-bed. After
a while she said, “I were young once and I wanted
things I could not get.”

 There was another long pause. The boy’s
110 mouth opened. Then he frowned, but not knowing
he frowned.

 The woman said, “Um-hum! You thought I was
going to say but, didn’t you? You thought I was
going to say, but I didn’t snatch people’s pock-
115 etbooks. Well, I wasn’t going to say that.” Pause.
Silence. “I have done things, too, which I would not
tell you, son—neither tell God, if he didn’t already
know. So you set down while I fix us something to
eat. You might run that comb through your hair so
120 you will look presentable.”

 In another corner of the room behind a screen
was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up

and went behind the screen. The woman did not
watch the boy to see if he was going to run now,
125 nor did she watch her purse which she left behind
her on the day-bed. But the boy took care to sit
on the far side of the room where he thought she
could easily see him out of the corner of her eye,
if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman not
130 to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted
now.

“Do you need somebody to go to the store,”
asked the boy, “maybe to get some milk or some-
thing?”

135 “Don’t believe I do,” said the woman, “unless
you just want sweet milk yourself. I was going to
make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here.”

“That will be fine,” said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and ham she had
140 in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table.
The woman did not ask the boy anything about
where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that
would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she
told him about her job in a hotel beauty-shop that
145 stayed open late, what the work was like, and how
all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, red-
heads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her
ten-cent cake.

“Eat some more, son,” she said.

Thank You M'am

150 When they were finished eating she got up
and said, "Now, here, take this ten dollars and buy
yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do
not make the mistake of latching onto my pocket-
155 book nor nobody else's—because shoes come by
devilish like that will burn your feet. I got to get
my rest now. But I wish you would behave yourself,
son, from here on in."

 She led him down the hall to the front door
and opened it. "Goodnight! Behave yourself, boy!"
160 she said, looking out into the street.

 The boy wanted to say something else other
than "Thank you, m'am" to Mrs. Luella Bates
Washington Jones, but he couldn't do so as he
turned at the barren stoop and looked back at the
165 large woman in the door. He barely managed to
say "Thank you" before she shut the door. And he
never saw her again.

Biographical Sketch

Shirley Jackson

(1916-1965)

Born in 1916, Shirley Jackson lived in Burlingame, California, until her senior year of high school when her family relocated to Rochester, New York. She nearly flunked out of her first college—the University of Rochester—but later flourished at Syracuse University, where she became fiction editor of the campus humor magazine and co-founded a literary magazine with her fellow student and future husband Stanley Edgar Hyman.

After graduating with a degree in journalism, Jackson began to write professionally. Although her early career was marked by considerable rejection, Jackson's short stories and essays gradually gained popularity.

At a time when few women worked outside of the home, Jackson became the chief breadwinner of the family, while also raising four children. Her

humorous take on family life became a staple of publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Redbook*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Ladies Home Journal*. She would eventually author six novels, two memoirs, and more than 200 short stories.

Jackson also had a penchant for darker, disturbing stories. Her best-known novel, *The Haunting of Hill House*, has been called the quintessential haunted house story. Stephen King named it as one of the finest horror novels of all times, and the book is the basis for several film adaptations.

Jackson is perhaps best known for her short story "The Lottery" —another story with a disturbing plot. Originally published in 1948 in *The New Yorker*, the story is legendary for generating the most reader response of any story ever published by the esteemed magazine.

The Lottery

Shirley Jackson

"The Lottery" from THE LOTTERY by Shirley Jackson.
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1 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. The people of the village began
5 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 26th. But
in this village, where there were only about three
10 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.

15 The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of
20 books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones; Bobby and Harry Jones and Dickie Delacroix—the villagers pro-
25 nounced this name “Dellacroy”—eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys, and the
30 very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.

35 Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes. They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed. The women, wearing faded house dresses and sweaters, came shortly after their menfolk. They greeted one another and exchanged bits of gossip

The Lottery

40 as they went to join their husbands. Soon the
women, standing by their husbands, began to call
to their children, and the children came reluctantly,
having to be called four or five times. Bobby Martin
45 ducked under his mother's grasping hand and
ran, laughing, back to the pile of stones. His father
spoke up sharply, and Bobby came quickly and
took his place between his father and his oldest
brother.

The lottery was conducted—as were the
50 square dances, the teen club, the Halloween pro-
gram—by Mr. Summers who had time and energy
to devote to civic activities. He was a round-faced,
jovial man and he ran the coal business, and
people were sorry for him because he had no chil-
55 dren and his wife was a scold. When he arrived in
the square, carrying the black wooden box, there
was a murmur of conversation among the villagers,
and he waved and called, "Little late today, folks."
The postmaster, Mr. Graves, followed him, carry-
60 ing a three-legged stool, and the stool was put
in the center of the square and Mr. Summers set
the black box down on it. The villagers kept their
distance, leaving a space between themselves and
the stool, and when Mr. Summers said, "Some of
65 you fellows want to give me a hand?" there was
a hesitation before two men, Mr. Martin and his
oldest son, Baxter, came forward to hold the box

steady on the stool while Mr. Summers stirred up the papers inside it.

70 The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town, was born. Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new box, but no one liked to
75 upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box.

 There was a story that the present box had been made with some pieces of the box that had
80 preceded it, the one that had been constructed when the first people settled down to make a village here. Every year, after the lottery, Mr. Summers began talking again about a new box, but every year the subject was allowed to fade off
85 without anything's being done. The black box grew shabbier each year: by now it was no longer completely black but splintered badly along one side to show the original wood color, and in some places faded or stained.

90 Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter, held the black box securely on the stool until Mr. Summers had stirred the papers thoroughly with his hand. Because so much of the ritual had been forgotten or discarded, Mr. Summers had been successful in
95 having slips of paper substituted for the chips of wood that had been used for generations. Chips

The Lottery

of wood, Mr. Summers had argued had been all very well when the village was tiny, but now that the population was more than three hundred and likely to keep on growing, it was necessary to use something that would fit more easily into the black box. The night before the lottery, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves made up the slips of paper and put them in the box, and it was then taken to the safe of Mr. Summers' coal company and locked up until Mr. Summers was ready to take it to the square next morning. The rest of the year, the box was put away, sometimes one place, sometimes another; it had spent one year in Mr. Graves's barn and another year underfoot in the post office and sometimes it was set on a shelf in the Martin grocery and left there.

There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open. There were the lists to make up—of heads of families, heads of households in each family, members of each household in each family. There was the proper swearing-in of Mr. Summers by the postmaster, as the official of the lottery; at one time, some people remembered, 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
125 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. There had
been, also, a ritual salute, which the official of the
lottery had had to use in addressing each person
130 who came up to draw from the box, but this also
had changed with time, until now it was felt neces-
sary only for the official to speak to each person
approaching. Mr. Summers was very good at all
this; in his clean white shirt and blue jeans with
135 one hand resting carelessly on the black box he
seemed very proper and important as he talked
interminably to Mr. Graves and the Martins.

Just as Mr. Summers finally left off talking and
turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson
140 came hurriedly along the path to the square, her
sweater thrown over her shoulders, and slid into
place in the back of the crowd. "Clean forgot what
day it was," she said to Mrs. Delacroix, who stood
next to her, and they both laughed softly. "Thought
145 my old man was out back stacking wood," Mrs.
Hutchinson went on, "and then I looked out the
window and the kids was gone, and then I remem-
bered it was the twenty-seventh and came a-run-
ning." She dried her hands on her apron, and Mrs.
150 Delacroix said, "You're in time, though. They're still
talking away up there."

The Lottery

Mrs. Hutchinson craned her neck to see through the crowd and found her husband and children standing near the front. She tapped Mrs. Delacroix on the arm as a farewell and began to make her way through the crowd. The people separated good-humoredly to let her through: two or three people said in voices just loud enough to be heard across the crowd, "Here comes your, Missus, Hutchinson," and "Bill, she made it after all." Mrs. Hutchinson reached her husband, and Mr. Summers, who had been waiting, said cheerfully. "Thought we were going to have to get on without you, Tessie." Mrs. Hutchinson said grinning, "Wouldn't have me leave m'dishes in the sink, now, would you, Joe?" and soft laughter ran through the crowd as the people stirred back into position after Mrs. Hutchinson's arrival.

"Well, now," Mr. Summers said soberly, "guess we better get started, get this over with, so's we can go back to work. Anybody ain't here?"

"Dunbar," several people said. "Dunbar. Dunbar."

Mr. Summers consulted his list. "Clyde Dunbar," he said. "That's right. He's broke his leg, hasn't he? Who's drawing for him?"

"Me, I guess," a woman said and Mr. Summers turned to look at her. "Wife draws for her husband." Mr. Summers said. "Don't you have a

Introduction to Interpretive Work

180 grown boy to do it for you, Janey?" Although Mr. Summers and everyone else in the village knew the answer perfectly well, it was the business of the official of the lottery to ask such questions formally. Mr. Summers waited with an expression of polite
185 interest while Mrs. Dunbar answered.

"Horace's not but sixteen yet," Mrs. Dunbar said regretfully. "Guess I gotta fill in for the old man this year."

"Right," Mr. Summers said. He made a note on
190 the list he was holding. Then he asked, "Watson boy drawing this year?"

A tall boy in the crowd raised his hand. "Here," he said. "I'm drawing for my mother and me." He blinked his eyes nervously and ducked his head as
195 several voices in the crowd said things like "Good fellow, Jack." and "Glad to see your mother's got a man to do it."

"Well," Mr. Summers said, "guess that's everyone. Old Man Warner make it?"

200 "Here," a voice said and Mr. Summers nodded.

A sudden hush fell on the crowd as Mr. Summers cleared his throat and looked at the list. "All ready?" he called.

"Now, I'll read the names—heads of families
205 first—and the men come up and take a paper out of the box. Keep the paper folded in your hand without looking at it until everyone has had a turn. Everything clear?"

The Lottery

The people had done it so many times that
210 they only half listened to the directions: most of
them were quiet, wetting their lips, not looking
around. Then Mr. Summers raised one hand high
and said, "Adams." A man disengaged himself
from the crowd and came forward. "Hi, Steve," Mr.
215 Summers said and Mr. Adams said, "Hi, Joe." They
grinned at one another humorlessly and nervously.
Then Mr. Adams reached into the black box and
took out a folded paper. He held it firmly by one
corner as he turned and went hastily back to his
220 place in the crowd where he stood a little apart
from his family not looking down at his hand.

"Allen," Mr. Summers said, "Anderson.... Ben-
tham."

"Seems like there's no time at all between
225 lotteries any more." Mrs. Delacroix said to Mrs.
Graves in the back row.

"Seems like we got through with the last one
only last week."

"Time sure goes fast," Mrs. Graves said.

230 "Clark.... Delacroix."

"There goes my old man," Mrs. Delacroix said.
She held her breath while her husband went for-
ward.

"Dunbar," Mr. Summers said, and Mrs. Dunbar
235 went steadily to the box while one of the women
said, "Go on, Janey," and another said, "There she
goes."

240 “We’re next,” Mrs. Graves said. She watched
while Mr. Graves came around from the side of the
box, greeted Mr. Summers gravely and selected a
slip of paper from the box. By now, all through the
crowd there were men holding the small folded
papers in their large hand, turning them over and
over nervously. Mrs. Dunbar and her two sons
245 stood together, Mrs. Dunbar holding the slip of
paper.

 “Harburt.... Hutchinson.”

 “Get up there, Bill,” Mrs. Hutchinson said and
the people near her laughed.

250 “Jones.”

 “*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 lot-
tery.”

255 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.
260 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
265 with everybody.”

The Lottery

"Some places have already quit lotteries," Mrs. Adams said.

"Nothing but trouble in *that*," Old Man Warner said stoutly. "Pack of young fools."

270 "Martin." And Bobby Martin watched his father go forward. "Overdyke.... Percy."

"I wish they'd hurry," Mrs. Dunbar said to her older son. "I wish they'd hurry."

"They're almost through," her son said.

275 "You get ready to run tell Dad," Mrs. Dunbar said.

Mr. Summers called his own name and then stepped forward precisely and selected a slip from the box. Then he called, "Warner."

280 "Seventy-seventh year I been in the lottery," Old Man Warner said as he went through the crowd. "Seventy-seventh time."

285 "Watson." The tall boy came awkwardly through the crowd. Someone said, "Don't be nervous, Jack," and Mr. Summers said, "Take your time, son."

"Zanini."

290 After that, there was a long pause, a breathless pause, until Mr. Summers, holding his slip of paper in the air, said, "All right, fellows." For a minute, no one moved, and then all the slips of paper were opened. Suddenly, all the women began to speak at once, saying, "Who is it?," "Who's got it?," "Is it

the Dunbars?," "Is it the Watsons?" Then the voices
295 began to say, "It's Hutchinson. It's Bill. Bill Hutchin-
son's got it."

"Go tell your father," Mrs. Dunbar said to her
older son.

People began to look around to see the
300 Hutchinsons. Bill Hutchinson was standing quiet,
staring down at the paper in his hand. Suddenly,
Tessie Hutchinson shouted to Mr. Summers, "You
didn't give him time enough to take any paper he
wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair!"

305 "Be a good sport, Tessie," Mrs. Delacroix
called, and Mrs. Graves said, "All of us took the
same chance."

"Shut up, Tessie," Bill Hutchinson said.

"Well, everyone," Mr. Summers said, "that was
310 done pretty fast, and now we've got to be hurrying
a little more to get done in time." He consulted his
next list. "Bill," he said, "you draw for the Hutchin-
son family. You got any other households in the
Hutchinsons?"

315 "There's Don and Eva," Mrs. Hutchinson yelled.
"Make *them* take their chance!"

"Daughters draw with their husband's families,
Tessie," Mr. Summers said gently. "You know that
as well as anyone else."

320 "It wasn't *fair*," Tessie said.

The Lottery

"I guess not, Joe," Bill Hutchinson said regretfully. "My daughter draws with her husband's family; that's only fair. And I've got no other family except the kids."

325 "Then, as far as drawing for families is concerned, it's you," Mr. Summers said in explanation, "and as far as drawing for households is concerned, that's you, too. Right?"

"Right," Bill Hutchinson said.

330 "How many kids, Bill?" Mr. Summers asked formally.

"Three," Bill Hutchinson said.

"There's Bill, Jr., and Nancy, and little Dave. And Tessie and me."

335 "All right, then," Mr. Summers said. "Harry, you got their tickets back?"

Mr. Graves nodded and held up the slips of paper. "Put them in the box, then," Mr. Summers directed. "Take Bill's and put it in."

340 "I think we ought to start over," Mrs. Hutchinson said, as quietly as she could. "I tell you it wasn't *fair*. You didn't give him time enough to choose. *Everybody* saw that."

345 Mr. Graves had selected the five slips and put them in the box and he dropped all the papers but those onto the ground where the breeze caught them and lifted them off.

“Listen, everybody,” Mrs. Hutchinson was saying to the people around her.

350 “Ready, Bill?” Mr. Summers asked and Bill Hutchinson, with one quick glance around at his wife and children, nodded.

“Remember,” Mr. Summers said, “take the slips and keep them folded until each person has
355 taken one. Harry, you help little Dave.” Mr. Graves took the hand of the little boy, who came willingly with him up to the box. “Take a paper out of the box, Davy,” Mr. Summers said. Davy put his hand into the box and laughed. “Take just *one* paper.”
360 Mr. Summers said. “Harry, you hold it for him.” Mr. Graves took the child’s hand and removed the folded paper from the tight fist and held it while little Dave stood next to him and looked up at him wonderingly.

365 “Nancy next,” Mr. Summers said. Nancy was twelve, and her school friends breathed heavily as she went forward switching her skirt, and took a slip daintily from the box.

“Bill, Jr.,” Mr. Summers said, and Billy, his face
370 red and his feet overlarge, near knocked the box over as he got a paper out. “Tessie,” Mr. Summers said. She hesitated for a minute, looking around defiantly and then set her lips and went up to the box. She snatched a paper out and held it behind
375 her.

The Lottery

"Bill," Mr. Summers said, and Bill Hutchinson reached into the box and felt around, bringing his hand out at last with the slip of paper in it.

380 The crowd was quiet. A girl whispered, "I hope it's not Nancy," and the sound of the whisper reached the edges of the crowd.

"It's not the way it used to be," Old Man Warner said clearly. "People ain't the way they used to be."

385 "All right," Mr. Summers said. "Open the papers. Harry, you open little Dave's."

Mr. Graves opened the slip of paper and there was a general sigh through the crowd as he held it up and everyone could see that it was blank.

390 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.

395 "Tessie," Mr. Summers said. There was a pause, and then Mr. Summers looked at Bill Hutchinson, and Bill unfolded his paper and showed it. It was blank.

"It's Tessie," Mr. Summers said, and his voice was hushed. "Show us her paper, Bill."

400 Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of paper out of her hand. It had a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal

company office. Bill Hutchinson held it up and
405 there was a stir in the crowd.

“All right, folks,” Mr. Summers said. “Let’s finish quickly.”

Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual
and lost the original black box, they still remem-
410 bered to use stones. The pile of stones the boys
had made earlier was ready; there were stones on
the ground with the blowing scraps of paper that
had come out of the box. Mrs. Delacroix selected
a stone so large she had to pick it up with both
415 hands and turned to Mrs. Dunbar. “Come on,” she
said. “Hurry up.”

Mrs. Dunbar had small stones in both hands,
and she said gasping for breath, “I can’t run at all.
You’ll have to go ahead and I’ll catch up with you.”

420 The children had stones already. And someone
gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles.

Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of a
cleared space by now, and she held her hands out
desperately as the villagers moved in on her.

425 “It isn’t fair,” she said. A stone hit her on the
side of the head. Old Man Warner was saying,
“Come on, come on, everyone.” Steve Adams was
in the front of the crowd of villagers, with Mrs.
Graves beside him.

430 “It isn’t fair, it isn’t right,” Mrs. Hutchinson
screamed, and then they were upon her.