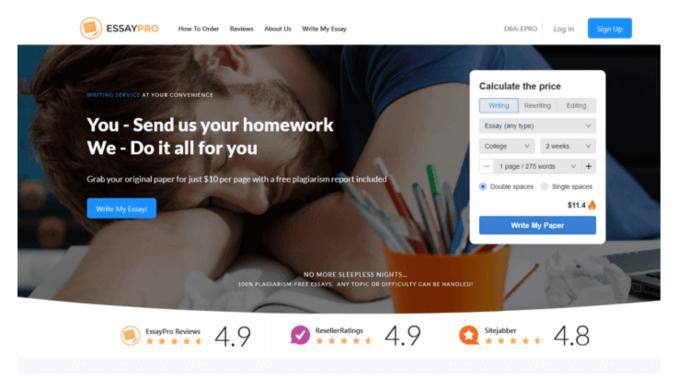
Shirley Jackson's The Lottery and Albert Camus' The Guest



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Two great works known for irony, in one a great author, Albert Camus, creates a masterpiece and in the other, a masterpiece creates a great author, Shirley Jackson. Camus had been known to the world and his works had been studied even without the presence of "I'hote" or known as The Guest, but Shirley <u>Jackson</u> was a nobody till she wrote The Lottery and stunned the world.

Both works are studied as pieces of irony but I believe both to be great works in other, with a twist of irony in the conclusion, although, worth mentioning, the ironies both serve to the other purpose rather than the plane simple sake of irony.

The <u>Guest</u>, a pen and paper advert for Paul Sartre's <u>Existentialism</u>, carries traces of this thought throughout, while, The Lottery, being a symbolic society questioner, with its many symbols undermines the American society. But both short stories carry within them even more, they talk of breaking the norms, they speak of minorities, giving up, and waste of life.

The Existentialists say man is free to choose yet the choice and having to choose is inevitable and this is seen in The Guest where the Arab is forced into Daru's life so thrusting upon him the crossroad of what to do with the Arab, either turn him in or let him go. In Existentialist belief due to the exact same choice man is always anxious and hesitant, not knowing whether his choice is proper or not, is it accepted by others or not, and this is seen so clearly again by the simple repetition of the word "hesitation" and its other forms in the story:

- 1. "The orders? I'm not..." Daru hesitated... {A choice forced upon him}
- 2. He served Balducci more tea, hesitated, the... {Hesitation before the person forcing the situation upon him}
- 3. The old gendarme hesitated. "It's up to you... {Hesitation while expressing choice}
- 4. The Arab hesitated, then bit into... {Hesitation before even life's inevitables such as eating}
- 5. In the classroom, before going out, he hesitated a second... {Hesitation before making a choice}
- 6. Looked hesitantly at the motionless Arab... {Hesitation before the source of choice}
- 7. Daru hesitated. The sun rather high... {Hesitant look at life} In the end Daru tries to get out of choosing by putting responsibility of the choice on the Arab but this in itself is again choosing.

Existentialist beliefs express the dilemma in life and again is shown by Daru not being able to decide what to do with the Arab, whether to go against his country, and let the Arab free to choose, or go against his morals, and turn him in, and all life comes to the crossroad dilemma between freedom and prison for the Arab.

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