

## **The Lottery: 1951 Radio Script**

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... A BRIGHT, FOLKSY FIDDLE TUNE ... THEN UNDER—

MRS. SUMMERS: Floyd? Floyd!

MR. SUMMERS: (HALF-ASLEEP, GROANS)

MRS. SUMMERS: Floyd Summers, you get up out o' that bed!

MR. SUMMERS: Ohhh, tain't seven yet.

MRS. SUMMERS: Of course it ain't.

MR. SUMMERS: (GROANS)

MRS. SUMMERS: Now you get up, you hear? It's Lottery Day!

MUSIC: UP FOR A TRANSITION ... THEN UNDER—

MRS. DELACROIX: Now, Dicky, you eat your cereal.

DICKY: I don't want no more, Ma.

MRS. DELACROIX: You eat up your cereal 'cause you ain't gonna have nothing but sandwiches till supper time.

DICKY: Sandwiches?

MRS. DELACROIX: You heard me. I'm not gonna cook no three hot meals on Lottery Day.

MUSIC: UP FOR A TRANSITION ... THEN UNDER—

SOUND: CHICKENS AND OTHER FARM ANIMALS

BILL: All right, Davy. That's enough for the chickens.

DAVY: Shoo! Shoo!

BILL: Come on now, son. We've got to fork hay down for the cows. We won't be back all day.

DAVY: Ma coming, too? Just like Sunday for church?

BILL: Yeah, that's right. All folks from the town line'll be in today for the Lottery.

MUSIC: UP FOR A TRANSITION ... THEN UNDER—

WARNER: I can't find my collar stud. Who took my collar stud?!

LAURA: Now, just don't fret, Grandsire. It's around here somewhere.

WARNER: If I can't find my collar stud, I ain't going. Seventy-seven Lotteries I been to — never missed a one. Laura, you find my collar stud, you hear?

MUSIC: UP FOR PUNCTUATION ... THEN IN BG, FADES OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full summer day. The flowers were blossoming and the grass on the town green in front of the bandstand was a nice warm summer green. [X] The folks in the village and the farmers inside the township line began to gather in the square between the post office and the bank by about ten o'clock. School was out for the summer and the kids came in early to chase around the board sidewalks the way kids will.

DICKY: (IN BACKGROUND) One, two, three—

NARRATOR: Bobby Martin and Harry Jones were sitting in front of the post office swapping stones. Bobby had his pockets full already — nice, smooth round ones. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, and looking over their shoulders at the boys, and the very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers and sisters.

MR. SUMMERS: Morning, John.

SCHOOLMASTER:

(UNENTHUSIASTIC) Morning, Mr. Summers.

MR. SUMMERS: Nice day for the Lottery, ain't it?

SCHOOLMASTER: Yes.

MR. SUMMERS: Had rain yesterday up to the North Village. They got to start the Lottery a day ahead to get it done. Two hundred families.

SCHOOLMASTER: That right?

MR. SUMMERS: Yup. Got to hustle to get the Lottery over with up there. Won't take us more than maybe a couple of hours.

SCHOOLMASTER: It seems longer.

MR. SUMMERS: (CHUCKLES) That's the way it is with the Lottery. I was talking it over with Mrs. Summers. It's the sus-pense makes time go slow.

SCHOOLMASTER: Not slow enough.

MR. SUMMERS: You draw this year, don't you?

SCHOOLMASTER: I guess so.

MR. SUMMERS: Yeah, that's the rule, all right. Stranger in town draws his second year.

MRS. DELACROIX: (APPROACHES, CHEERFUL) Morning, Mr. Summers; John.

SCHOOLMASTER: Ma'am.

MR. SUMMERS: Morning, Mrs. Delacroix. In early, I see.

MRS. DELACROIX: Well, I don't get up to the village often. George don't like to leave the stock. You going to have the store open after?

MR. SUMMERS: Most likely. Didn't used to be done.

MRS. DELACROIX: Well, you got to be modern, I always say. Excuse me, won't you? Martinses just got in. (MOVING OFF) It's a nice day for it, though. You can say that for a fact!

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... "SKIP TO MY LOU" ... TRANSITION

SOUND: HORSE AND BUGGY ROLLING DOWN A DIRT ROAD ...  
THEN IN BG

DAVY: Can't you go faster, Pa? We'll miss everything!

BILL: Oh, don't worry, Davy. We'll get there in plenty of time.

TESSIE: (ENTHUSIASTIC) I want to go into Summers' Store, after, to get some patterns. Elsie Dunbar told me he's got some new ones in for short-waisted figures.

BILL: (TROUBLED) Let's not talk about it, Tessie.

TESSIE: What do you mean? I've got that flowered stuff left over from last year and if I can get a good pattern—

BILL: I don't want to talk about "after."

TESSIE: Oh.

DAVY: Come on, Pa, can't we go no faster?

BILL: All right. (TO HORSE) Hup, there, gid up! Hup! Hup, there!

SOUND: HORSE AND BUGGY SPEED UP A LITTLE

BILL: I was talking to John Gunderson.

TESSIE: The school teacher?

BILL: (YES) Mm hmm. He's got to draw this year.

TESSIE: It's only right. Second year in town.

BILL: I told him I was thinking of packing and moving out.

TESSIE: Bill Hutchinson! You crazy?

BILL: I told him I was going to pack the wagon and tie the stock on to the end of it and just move out.

TESSIE: You mean just — just leave the farm?

BILL: That's right. I was gonna do it before Lottery Day this year.

TESSIE: That's crazy, Bill! Where would you settle? Why, your folks have farmed that ground since heaven knows when!

BILL: Yep, I know. I was gonna just move out. It's too late now.

TESSIE: (GOOD-NATURED) Oh, Bill! You talk the same way every year. No sense to it.

BILL: No. There's no sense to it.

TESSIE: A woman sees things like this — clearer. You just don't think about it, that's all. You come in for the Lottery — then go to Summers and buy something nice, talk to folks. Why don't you look at it that way, Bill?

BILL: Yeah. I suppose you're right. School teacher agreed with me, though.  
(TO HORSE) Go on! Get up there!

SOUND: HORSE AND BUGGY SPEED UP A LITTLE MORE

DAVY: That's the way, Pa! Hurry up! We'll miss all the fun!

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... BRISK TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, OUT AT [X]

NARRATOR: Soon, the men began to gather, standing around smoking, looking at the kids, talking about planting — rain — tractors — taxes. You know. Dicky Delacroix and a couple of kids had made a great big pile of stones in one corner of the square and they were playing "King of the Hill" on it. [X] The men stood together, away from the pile of stones, watching. Their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed.

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... MATCHES ABOVE DESCRIPTION ...  
BRIEFLY IN BG

SOUND: CROWD BACKGROUND ... ADULTS CHATTER WHILE THE KIDS PLAY OFF

MR. SUMMERS: They're nice-looking folks, aren't they, John?

SCHOOLMASTER: Yeah. They're nice.

MR. SUMMERS: You don't see 'em all together 'cept on Lottery Day. Of course, there's Sunday in church, but some go to the Congregationalists and some to the Baptist and folks like the Dunbars don't go nowhere.

TESSIE: (APPROACHES) Morning, Mr. Summers!

MR. SUMMERS: Morning, Tessie! I've got those patterns in!

TESSIE: (MOVING OFF) I'll be over right after.

BILL: (GREETING) John.

SCHOOLMASTER: Morning, Bill.

BILL: (LOW) I want to talk to you. (UP) Hello, Summers.

MR. SUMMERS: Morning. Don't worry about me. I've got to see about the box and all for the drawing. (MOVING OFF, TO ANOTHER) Oh, morning, Charlie. How's the folks?

SCHOOLMASTER: Well, it's the day.

BILL: Yeah. You going to draw?

SCHOOLMASTER: I've got to. That's the rules.

BILL: You said you wouldn't! You sat there in the post office and said you wouldn't!

SCHOOLMASTER: I know, but I'd have to leave town and it isn't easy to get another school this late.

BILL: Well – Anyways, you only draw for yourself. Tessie keeps talking about “after”; starts me to sweating. She keeps talking about buying a pattern up to the Summers' Store, after. Short-waisted, she said.

SCHOOLMASTER: I suppose you get used to it. I suppose if you've always had it, you don't think about it.

BILL: I don't! I lived in the village all my life. I don't get used to it.

SOUND: DAVY'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACH

DAVY: (EXCITED) Pa! Can I stay with Dicky Delacroix? Can I stay with him?

BILL: No, you've got to stay with the family, Davy.

DAVY: (PLEADS) Pa, the other kids got all the stones. Can't I stay with him?

BILL: Davy, I said—

SOUND: DAVY RUNS OFF

BILL: Davy! Come here, Davy! David! (BEAT, TO SCHOOLMASTER) Look at that. He's having fun. All the kids are having fun. Why? That's what I want to know. Why?

SCHOOLMASTER: You're a farmer. You know the answer.

BILL: You told me you couldn't find anything in the books says it has to be. It stands to reason you'd find it in the books, don't it?

SCHOOLMASTER: This isn't my part of the country, Hutchinson. I don't make the rules.

BILL: Well, don't it stand to reason you could try to find out the truth? That's all I say.

SCHOOLMASTER: You can't argue with the folks about the Lottery. I've tried.

BILL: No. You can't argue with folks. (GRUDGING) Well, anyways, it's a nice day for it.

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... BRISK TRANSITION

WARNER: It ain't right! I've been telling them, year after year — it ain't right!

LAURA: Now, Grandsire, take it easy.

WARNER: Now, you listen to me, Floyd Summers! I'm the oldest man in the village. Seventy-seven years I've been in the Lottery. Seventy-seven years!

MR. SUMMERS: (HEARD IT ALL BEFORE) Yeah, I know that, Mr. Warner, but—

WARNER: Don't "but" me! No, sir! Don't "but" me. I know what's right about the Lottery. It ought to be chips of wood! One chip with the name of every family, all in the big black box.

MR. SUMMERS: We can't do it that way, Grandsire, you know that. The box ain't big enough.

WARNER: That's the way it was when I was a boy. Chips of wood! None of this here bitty pieces of paper. (SCORNFUL) Paper, huh! What kind of a Lottery you expect to have with paper?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, there's too many folks in the village for wood any more.

WARNER: (DISGUSTED) Ahhh! Nobody pays any mind to the old ways. There ought to be marching, too. I – I remember marching and – and somebody sort of – of chanting, like! That's what there ought to be on Lottery Day!

MR. SUMMERS: Ahh, that was a long time ago. Nobody ‘members that any more.

WARNER: Yes, that’s the trouble! Nobody remembers. Now you take that black box–

MR. SUMMERS: It’s cracking. We ought to make a new one.

WARNER: A new one?! Listen to him! A new box? Why, they used that box in my father’s time for the Lottery. And he told me it’s made from the pieces of the box in his grandfather’s time! Now, you’re supposed to be in charge of that box. Why, I saw it year before last lying in Graves’ barn. And this year it sat right on the shelf in your store! Now is that any way to take care of that box? They don’t run the lottery the way they used to! Hey, I’ve been in it seventy-seven years and I ought to know!

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... FOR PUNCTUATION ... THEN A BRIEF TRANSITION

BILL: (LOW) Tessie? Tessie, come here.

TESSIE: What? Oh, excuse me, Mrs. Delacroix.

MRS. DELACROIX: All right, Tessie.

SOUND: TESSIE’S FOOTSTEPS TO BILL

BILL: Tessie?

TESSIE: What is it, Bill?

BILL: Where’s Davy?

TESSIE: Playing with the other children; there by the stones.

BILL: Get him over here.

TESSIE: Why?

BILL: We’re hitching up and getting out.

TESSIE: Oh, we’ve got to wait for the drawing. We can’t go now.

BILL: I said, we’re going now.



TESSIE: Oh, Bill, don't be silly. First place, we came all the way into the village for the Lottery. Second place, Summers' won't be open till after. And I want to get those patterns.

BILL: "After"? Don't you understand? Suppose— Suppose—

TESSIE: Bill, I'm surprised at you. Why, nobody else acts this way. You — you've just got to take it as it comes. You're a farmer, you know that!

BILL: What's that got to do with it?

TESSIE: Well, you didn't take on when the hog died of cholera before killing time. You just went on.

BILL: But that's different. It just happened. You can't help it if stock gets sick.

TESSIE: See? That's what I mean.

BILL: (BEAT) You won't go?

TESSIE: No, I won't; neither will you! I don't get into the village often and Lottery Day is one time I can see all the other women and talk. I'm not going back till it's all over and supper time! (CHUCKLES) My goodness, Bill, you'd think it was something unusual. Lottery comes every year. It always has.

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... BRIEF, SOMBER TRANSITION ... THEN UNDER BEHIND—

NARRATOR: The Lottery was conducted — as were the square dances, the teenage club, and the Halloween program — by Mr. Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic affairs. He was a round-faced, jovial man, and the people were sorry for him because he had no children and his wife was a scold. He was busy in the middle of the square with a little black box, setting it up and balancing it on a three-legged stool.

SOUND: CROWD BACKGROUND

MR. SUMMERS: One of you folks want to give me a hand with the box? Mr. Martin?

MR. MARTIN: All right, Floyd.

MR. SUMMERS: Here, just hold it on that corner steady there.

MAN: (OFF, JOKINGLY) Watch his hands, Summers!

SOUND: SOME IN THE CROWD LAUGH ... CROWD SETTLES DOWN TO A MURMUR BEHIND—

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) Now, we're going to do this fair and square just like always. Now, last night, up at the coal company office, Mr. Graves and I made up the slips of paper.

WARNER: It ought to be chips of wood! What kind of piddling Lottery can you have with slips of—?

LAURA: Now, Grandsire, don't you interrupt Mr. Summers.

MR. SUMMERS: (CONTINUES, TO ALL) They're in the box here. Anybody wants to, can haul 'em out and check 'em over. Time now for the swearing in. Mr. Graves will administer the oath to me. I expect as usual, we'll waive election.

WARNER: Didn't used to be no election. Used to pass from father to son!

MR. GRAVES: All right, all right! Do you, Floyd Summers, solemnly swear to carry out the duties of this Lottery without fear, favor or prejudice, bias or any other untoward acts of omission or commission, so help you?

MR. SUMMERS: I do.

MRS. SUMMERS: You tell 'em, Floyd!

SOUND: SOME IN THE CROWD LAUGH ... CROWD SETTLES DOWN TO A MURMUR BEHIND—

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) Well, I expect now we're ready. We'll proceed as usual, drawing by family, as according to the rules.

MRS. MARTIN: (APPROACHES) Wait a minute! You wait a minute, Floyd Summers!

SOUND: CROWD STIRS BRIEFLY, THEN SETTLES DOWN TO A MURMUR—

MR. SUMMERS: Looks like another interruption. Oh! Morning, Mrs. Martin!

MRS. MARTIN: How do you like that? Clean forgot what day it was! Hello, Tessie!

SOUND: TESSIE AND OTHER WOMEN GREET MRS. MARTIN

MRS. MARTIN: Thought my old man was out back stacking wood. Then I looked out the window and the kids was gone and I remembered it was the twenty-seventh and came a-running! Did I miss anything?

MRS. DELACROIX: Oh, you're in time. They're still talking away up there!

MR. SUMMERS: We was just beginning, Mrs. Martin. Now, you just take your place with your family.

MRS. MARTIN: Hands still wet from the dishwater!

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) Well now, I guess we better get started. Let's get this over with so's we can get back to work. Ain't everybody here? Huh? Well, now, let's— This ain't the drawing; just checking the list. Now, uh— (READS) Adams? (NO ANSWER) Adams? (TO ADAMS) Well! Glad to see ya. I missed you last Saturday.

SOUND: AS HE CALLS MORE NAMES, MR. SUMMERS' VOICE FADES TO BACKGROUND DURING NEXT TWO LINES—

TESSIE: I guess you made it after all, huh, Mrs. Martin?

MRS. MARTIN: Well, now, Tessie, between you and me, I knew it was Lottery Day, but you wouldn't have me leave the dishes in the sink now, would you? (LAUGHS)

MR. SUMMERS: (READS) Dunbar? (NO ANSWER) Dunbar? (NO ANSWER)

SOUND: CROWD STIRS BRIEFLY, THEN SETTLES DOWN TO A MURMUR—

WARNER: Where's Dunbar?

MRS. DELACROIX: Dunbar? Come on!

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) Who draws for Dunbar? Clyde broke his leg, didn't he? Now, who's drawing for him?

MRS. DUNBAR: Well, I guess I draw.

MR. SUMMERS: Oh, that's right. That's the rule — wife draws for husband. 'Cepting you've got a grown boy to do it for you, haven't you, Janie?

MRS. DUNBAR: Well, Horace is not but sixteen yet. Guess I got to fill in for the old man this year.

MR. SUMMERS: All right. I've got that checked. Watson boy drawing this year? (NO ANSWER) Yeah—? Oh, there you are, Charlie! Good to see your mother's got a man to do it. (WITH A TWINKLE) I suppose Old Man Warner's here.

WARNER: You know darned well I'm here, Floyd Summers! I was just talking to you! I ain't missed a Lottery in seventy-seven years!

MR. SUMMERS: (CHUCKLES) All right, Grandsire, I was just joking. (TO ALL) Well, that gets the list straight. All the rest is straight families. 'Less anybody's got anything to add, we're ready for the drawing.

SOUND: CROWD STIRS BRIEFLY ("Yeah, I got nothing to say," "No, go ahead," etc.), THEN SETTLES DOWN TO A MURMUR—

MR. SUMMERS: Now, then— Adams? Adams?

SOUND: CROWD STIRS BRIEFLY ("Adams?," "Adams's coming," "There he is; he's coming," etc.) ... ADAMS' FOOTSTEPS TO BOX ... CROWD MURMURS AND COMMENTS AS EACH PARTICIPANT DRAWS FROM THE BOX

MR. SUMMERS: Yeah, hi, Steve. Just draw any one. Don't look at it till after.

SOUND: ADAMS DRAWS SLIP ... HIS FOOTSTEPS AWAY

MR. SUMMERS: Next— Adamson? Adamson?

SOUND: ADAMSON'S FOOTSTEPS TO BOX, DRAWS SLIP

MR. SUMMERS: Right, that does it.

SOUND: ADAMSON'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY

MR. SUMMERS: Anderson? Anderson?

MRS. MARTIN: It seems like they changed the order o' drawing, don't it, Tessie?

TESSIE: Oh, no. That's the way it's always been.

MRS. MARTIN: Seems like there's just no time at all between Lotteries any more. Seems like we got through with the last one only last week. I declare, the way time flies.

TESSIE: Time sure goes fast.

MR. SUMMERS: Delacroix? Delacroix?

MRS. DELACROIX: (SLIGHTLY TENSE) There goes my old man.

TESSIE: Now, don't worry, Agnes.

MR. SUMMERS: Dunbar? Dunbar?

TESSIE: That's you, Janie!

MRS. DUNBAR: (SELF-CONSCIOUS) Well, if you ladies will excuse me—

TESSIE: (CHUCKLES)

MR. SUMMERS: Come on, Janie, you're holding us up!

MRS. DELACROIX: There she goes!

MRS. DUNBAR: I'm coming, I'm coming!

TESSIE: Folks shouldn't hold up the Lottery! It takes up a perfectly good morning as it is. Last year, I didn't get time for half the things I meant to do in town!

MRS. MARTIN: You're right, Tessie! My old man says he don't like Lottery Day 'cause I always run the bill up at Summers' sky high!

MR. SUMMERS: Gunderson? John Gunderson?

MRS. DELACROIX: There goes the schoolmaster.

SCHOOLMASTER: I'm not going to draw, Mr. Summers.

SOUND: CROWD STIRS BRIEFLY ("What?" "He's got to draw!")

MR. SUMMERS: Now, John, you know the rules. This is your second year in the village.

SCHOOLMASTER: I know. But I'm not going to draw.

GRAVES: Now don't be contrary, boy.

MRS. DUNBAR: Everybody draws in the Lottery! What makes you better, Schoolmaster?

SCHOOLMASTER: I don't believe in it.

MR. SUMMERS: Now, that isn't the point, John, and you know it.

WARNER: Listen to him! He don't believe in the Lottery! You hear that?

LAURA: Now take it easy, Grandsire.

WARNER: Why, we've always had the Lottery! Everybody knows that! Always have and always will.

SCHOOLMASTER: Over in the North Village, they're talking of giving up the Lottery.

WARNER: A pack of crazy fools in North Village! Listen to this idiot! Nothing's good enough for him. Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves — nobody work anymore! Live like that for a while, and—

SCHOOLMASTER: They don't have the Lottery up where I come from. Stopped it years ago.

WARNER: Yeah, maybe so, but we ain't fools. Not here. Used to be a saying, "Lottery in June, corn'll grow soon." You listen to him with his books and ciphering, first thing you know, we'll all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns!

TESSIE: You're right, Grandsire!

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS AGREEMENT

WARNER: Yeah, sure. There's always been a Lottery! Bad enough it ain't what it used to be, with Floyd Summers up there joking and all. But there's always been a Lottery!

SCHOOLMASTER: But why? Why? I tell you, they stopped it up north — more villages every year — and the corn grows just as high!

WARNER: Nothing but trouble in that! Pack of fools!

MR. MARTIN: Now, you ain't no farmer, Gunderson! Old man Warner's right—

WARNER: Yes, sir!

MR. MARTIN: "Lottery in June, corn'll grow soon." That's the way it's always been.

MRS. MARTIN: You can't get around that, schoolmaster! "Lottery in June—"

SCHOOLMASTER: But nobody knows! You've never tried. You just go on and on every year, the same way!

WARNER: You're darn tootin'! And we're going right on just like we always done! What call has a young outsider to talk that way on Lottery Day? That's what I'd like to know!

MAN: Now don't get raw, Grandsire.

WARNER: Seventy-seven years I've been coming to Lottery Day.

SCHOOLMASTER: But can't you see there's no reason for it? No reason! Year after year, for generations, on June twenty-seventh? If you'd only think. If you'd only try! If you were willing to use reason instead of blind obedience to a crazy outworn tradition!

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS INCREASING SKEPTICISM DURING ABOVE

MR. SUMMERS: That'll be about enough now, John. You spoke your piece. Now, we better get down to business. Rules say if anybody balks, the committee draws for him. Now, ain't that right, folks?

SOUND: CROWD AGREES

WARNER: It certainly is! That's right!

MR. SUMMERS: Now, I'm going to call you again regular and proper. If you stand mute, we'll go right on and draw for you. Now, which is it?

SCHOOLMASTER: (GIVES IN, RELUCTANT) All right. All right. I'll go.

MR. SUMMERS: Fine. Fine.

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS APPROVAL ... SCHOOLMASTER'S FOOTSTEPS TO BOX ... DRAWS SLIP, FOOTSTEPS AWAY

MR. SUMMERS: Now, let's get on. Hutchinson? Bill Hutchinson?

TESSIE: Get on up there, Bill.

MRS. DELACROIX: There goes your man, Tessie.

TESSIE: Imagine the schoolmaster making such a fuss! He's no better than the rest. Everybody draws on Lottery Day!

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... TRANSITION

MR. SUMMERS: All right, sir. Now the last one. Warner?

WARNER: (EAGER) Yes, sir! I'm right here!

SOUND: WARNER'S FOOTSTEPS TO BOX ... SLOWLY, DURING FOLLOWING—

MR. SUMMERS: (AMUSED) All right, Grandsire, take it easy. No rush.

WARNER: This makes the seventy-seventh year I've been in the Lottery. Yes, sir! Seventy-seven times!

MR. SUMMERS: Draw your slip, now.

WARNER: Yep.

SOUND: WARNER DRAWS SLIP

MR. SUMMERS: All right, it's all done. Martin, close the box.

MR. MARTIN: (GRUNTS WITH EFFORT AS—)

SOUND: THE WOODEN BOX IS SHUT ... THE CROWD STIRS EAGERLY

MRS. MARTIN: Who's got it? What family?

MAN: I ain't. I ain't got it.

LAURA: (VERY EAGER) Grandsire, let me see your paper. Let me see it.



WARNER: You let go of my hand, you hear? I can take care of myself.

DICKY: Ma? Ma, is it us? Is it us, Ma?

MRS. DELACROIX: Well, for goodness sake! What family is it? Who's got it?!

SOUND: CROWD GROWS SILENT BEHIND—

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) All right. All right. All right, folks! Now, let's do this orderly! Come now; come on. Now, what family's got the black slip?

MRS. MARTIN: (BEAT) It's the Hutchinsons. There! Look, Bill Hutchinson's got it!

SOUND: CROWD STIRS A LITTLE ("Hutchinson?" "Yeah, that's right.")

MRS. DUNBAR: (LOW, QUICK) Peggy? Peggy, you run and tell your father it's the Hutchinsons; go on, run!

TESSIE: (STARTS TO PANIC) It isn't fair! It isn't fair! Floyd Summers, I saw you! You didn't give him time to take any slip he wanted. I saw ya; it wasn't fair!

MRS. DELACROIX: Now, Tessie, be a good sport.

MRS. GRAVES: All of us took the same chance.

TESSIE: It isn't fair, I tell you! It isn't fair!

BILL: (EMBARRASSED, WHISPERS) Shut up, Tessie.

MR. SUMMERS: (PLEASED, TO ALL) Well, now, everybody, that was done pretty fast. Just one hour and two minutes.

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS APPRECIATIVELY ... THEN IN BG

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) Now, we've got to be hurrying a little more to get done before noon.

TESSIE: It wasn't fair!

MR. SUMMERS: Now, Bill, uh, let's see. You draw for the Hutchinson family, don't you? You got any other households in the Hutchinsons?

TESSIE: (DESPERATE) There's Don and Eva! Make them take their chance! Make them draw!

MR. SUMMERS: Now, Tessie, Eva's your daughter, but she's married now. Daughters draw with their husbands' families, you know that as well as anyone else.

TESSIE: It wasn't fair. (STARTS TO CRY ... CONTINUES IN BG)

BILL: I guess that's it, Floyd. My daughter draws with her husband's family, that's only fair.

MR. SUMMERS: Well, now, Bill?

BILL: I guess there's just us, Floyd — Davy, Tessie and me.

MR. SUMMERS: All right now. And, as far as drawing for families is concerned, it's you. And as far as drawing for households is concerned, that's you, too?

BILL: Yes, that's right.

MR. SUMMERS: Martin, you give me the tickets for the Hutchinsons, all three of 'em. You got their tickets back?

MR. MARTIN: I got 'em. They're in the box, Floyd.

MR. SUMMERS: All set then.

TESSIE: (INTENSE) I – I think we ought to start over.

MR. SUMMERS: Now, Tessie—

SOUND: CROWD STIRS

TESSIE: (TEARFUL) I tell ya, it wasn't fair! He didn't give him time enough to choose. Everybody saw that!

MR. SUMMERS: We'll have to get on now. Are you ready, Bill?

TESSIE: Listen, everybody! Listen! You've got to listen! It wasn't fair — you could see that.

MR. SUMMERS: Ready, Bill?

BILL: Ready.

MR. SUMMERS: Davy picks first, then you, then Tessie. Now, you got that? Here, help little Dave.

BILL: Davy, come here.

DAVY: Sure, Pa.

TESSIE: It wasn't fair. Mrs. Delacroix, you could see! They didn't give him time!

MRS. DELACROIX: Now, don't make a fuss, Tessie. It ain't fittin'.

MR. SUMMERS: All right now, Bill. You take the slips and keep 'em folded till everybody picks. Come on, Davy.

BILL: Go on, son.

SOUND: DAVY'S FOOTSTEPS TO BOX

MR. SUMMERS: Now, Davy — I want you to pick a piece of paper out of this box and hold it tight, you understand?

DAVY: Sure, Mr. Summers.

MR. SUMMERS: All right. Pick now. (BEAT, CHUCKLES) Just — just one paper, Davy.

DAVY: I got one!

MR. SUMMERS:

Good. Now, you better hold it for him, Martin.

MR. MARTIN: All set.

MR. SUMMERS: All right, Bill — one paper. (BEAT) That's right. (BEAT) Now Tessie.

TESSIE: Oh, no. No, it wasn't fair.

BILL: (LOW) Tessie, you've got to draw.

MR. SUMMERS: Come on, Tessie.

TESSIE: (BEAT) All right. All right.

SOUND: CROWD STIRS A LITTLE

MRS. GRAVES: (LOW) I hope it ain't the child. Don't seem right.

WARNER: Yeah, it's not the way it used to be. I tell you, it ought to be chips of wood. Lottery ain't like it used to be. People ain't the way they used to be.

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS AGREEMENT ... THEN GROWS SILENT BEHIND—

MR. SUMMERS: Quiet now, folks. Now, let's open the papers. Davy?

MR. MARTIN: Come on, Davy, open your paper.

SOUND: DAVY OPENS PAPER

DAVY: (INNOCENTLY) There's nothing on it.

MR. SUMMERS: Well.

SOUND: CROWD REACTS, PLEASED

MR. SUMMERS: Bill?

BILL: (BEAT, FLAT) Mine's blank.

MR. SUMMERS: Then I guess it's Tessie.

TESSIE: (HORRIFIED) Oh, no. No— (STARTS TO WEEP HYSTERICALLY)

MR. SUMMERS: Show us her paper, Bill. Just the rules.

BILL: Tessie, open your hand.

TESSIE: No! No, no, no—

BILL: (WITH EFFORT) Come on, now. Open your hand.

TESSIE: (WEEPS, CONTINUES IN BG)

MR. SUMMERS: Yep, it's Tessie, all right.

SOUND: CROWD MURMURS EXPECTANTLY

DICKY: (TO MRS. DELACROIX) Ma, I'm going over by the pile of stones, all right?

MR. SUMMERS: (TO ALL) All right, folks — let's finish quickly now.

TESSIE: No, no, no! It isn't fair! Oh, Bill! Bill! No, Bill—! (WEEPS)

BILL: (LOW, APOLOGETIC) It's too late, Tessie. There's nothing I can do.

MRS. DUNBAR: Come on, Mrs. Delacroix, we'd better get a good stone before they're all gone.

MRS. DELACROIX: Oh, Dicky'll save one for me.

MRS. DUNBAR: Well, hurry up. She'll be running soon.

TESSIE: It wasn't fair! There wasn't time! Oh, Bill! Bill, please! Bill!

BILL: (TRIES TO REASON WITH HER) You heard 'em, Tessie — "Lottery in June, corn'll grow soon."

TESSIE: It isn't true! It isn't true!

DICKY: Ma, here's a stone for you. Here, Ma.

MRS. DELACROIX: Aw, that's a nice boy, Dicky. Mmmm! What a nice big stone!

MRS. DUNBAR: Well, you'll have to go ahead and I'll catch up with you. Can't run at all with arthritis in my knees.

MRS. DELACROIX: All right. There's Davy. (CALLS) Davy?! Davy, come here.

DAVY: Yes, ma'am?

MRS. DELACROIX: Now here's a little stone for you. Take it.

DAVY: (PLEASED) Sure.

MRS. DELACROIX: Now, you come along with me, Davy.

DAVY: Sure, I don't wanna miss the fun. We've got to run after Ma now, huh?

MRS. DELACROIX: That's right, Davy. Come on!

TESSIE: It isn't fair! Listen, everybody! They didn't give him time! It wasn't fair!

MR. SUMMERS: Come on, everybody! (TO MRS. DELACROIX) Agnes—?

MRS. DELACROIX: Come on, Davy, throw your stone. Go on, throw your stone!

TESSIE: (HYSTERICAL) It isn't fair; it isn't right! Oh, Bill! Bill, you can't let them— Not me! It can't be me! Oh, it wasn't fair. They can't do it to me. Agnes, Emily, you can't! You can't really! Not me!

MRS. DELACROIX: Go on, Davy. Now, throw your stone!

TESSIE: (PEAK OF HYSTERIA) No! No, not the stones! No, it isn't right! Oh, Davy! Davy! My own baby! Don't! Don't!

DAVY: (GRUNTS WITH EFFORT)

SOUND: STONE HITS TESSIE

TESSIE: (SCREAMS)

SOUND: CROWD CHEERS ... THEN LAUGHS, HOLLERS HAPPILY, AND STARTS THROWING STONES ... FADES OUT ... PAUSE

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... A PLACID BRIDGE ... THEN UNDER—

NARRATOR: It was all over by noon. The sun was hot on the square and the men stood around the blacksmith shop, smoking and talking about planting and tractors and taxes. And the women gathered in Summers' and bought yard goods and patterns and notions. The little children played in the dust, throwing pebbles at each other. The Lottery was over for this year.

"Lottery in June, corn'll grow soon."

Next year? Next June twenty-seventh? Well, maybe we'll learn. Maybe there'll be no Lottery. Maybe we'll begin to reason, to find the truth. Maybe we'll find out we don't have to pick out folks in the Lottery just because our fathers and their fathers did it, because it always was that way. Maybe next year there won't be a Lottery. It's up to all of us.

Chances are, there will be, though.

MUSIC: SOLO VIOLIN ... TO A QUIET FINISH

ANNOUNCER: You have heard “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, whose novel “The Hangsman” will be published soon. The adaptation was by Ernest Kinoy of NBC. In tonight’s cast, Mrs. Summers was Louise Lorimer, Summers was Charles Seel, Mrs. Delacroix was Gail Bonney, Dicky was Johnny McGovern, Hutchinson was Jeff Corey, Davy was Jeffrey Silver, Warner was Steven Chase, Mrs. Dunbar was Irene Tedrow, the schoolmaster was Jim Nusser, Tessie was Margaret Brayton, Graves was Jack Nessler. The folk music was by Morris King. Your announcer, Don Stanley. The director of NBC PRESENTS SHORT STORY is Andrew C. Love.

MUSIC: BRIEF CLOSING THEME

ANNOUNCER: Be with us again two weeks from tonight as NBC PRESENTS SHORT STORY. On that occasion, a powerful story of machine politics and corruptible men — “Shadow of Evil” by James Aswell. Hear it two weeks from tonight. And, in the meantime, bear in mind this message from the United States Marine Corps—

United States Marine Corps training is training for leadership and training for life. If you were to examine the biographies of many of America’s most successful and prominent businessmen, statesmen and athletes, you would find that they received their basic leadership training in the Marine Corps. The ability to think quickly and precisely developed by these men as Marines now stands them in good stead as civilians.

One of the first things a Marine learns is how to take care of himself. As a result, self-sufficiency becomes one of his most prominent characteristics. And, in learning to care for himself, he also learns to care for his comrades and to direct their activities intelligently. In short, he learns how to lead. The young man who today is considering the various services may well give serious thought to this important aspect to Marine Corps training. No matter how he plans to earn his living in later years, Marine Corps training is leadership training — and will help him to succeed.

MUSIC: ANOTHER, BRIEFER CLOSING THEME