

# One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts

By Shirley Jackson

Published in January 1955



# Shirley Hardie Jackson

- Born December 14, 1916 in San Francisco, California
- Moved to Rochester, New York with family at 17 years old
- Attended University of Rochester for a year, then quit to practice her writing



# Shirley Hardie Jackson

- Studied at Syracuse in 1937 (Wrote first book *Janice*)
- Met her future husband, Stanley Edgar Hyman, and together they started a literary magazine "*Spectre*"
- 1951-1952 Many other works and TV adaptations



# Shirley Hardie Jackson

- 1959 best-known book “*The Haunting of Hillhouse*”
- 1961 Received Edgar Allen Poe awards for “*Louisa, Please*”
- August 8, 1965 died from heart failure



# Other Literary Works by Shirley Jackson

- Hangsaman (1951)
- A Birds Nest (1954)
- The Lottery (1948)
- Don't Tell Daddy (1954)
- All She Said Was Yes (1962)

And many more novels, short stories, and memoirs



# Setting

**Peanuts!**

- Time: Breakfast to Dinner
- Place: New York City
- Social Milieu: Upper Middle Class Lifestyle with an abundance of cash



# Setting

## How It Adds to the Piece:

- Events happen right after each other
- The city is very busy, so Mr. Johnson has to choose a few of the millions to help.
- His social status is due to his gross amount of cash.



Primary Character(s)



## Primary Characters

# Mr. John Philip Johnson

- Round and Dynamic
  - In the end of the story, he surprisingly changes from a very nice character into a mean one.

Mr. Johnson: “Want to change over tomorrow?”

Mrs. Johnson: “I would like to. I could do with a change.”

Mr. John Philip Johnson

# Characterization

**Character's Actions** - Mr. Johnson gave out candy, peanuts, and money to strangers.

- Kind and affluent

**Effect on other characters** - We can infer that many characters (and animals!) he met became happier.

- Generous, kind

# Summary

- Mr. Johnson travels around the city of New York, and goes out of his way to help people. He starts off by buying candy and peanuts to offer to people.
- Then he watches a boy while his mother oversees the movers, and after he helps two young people get together for a day.

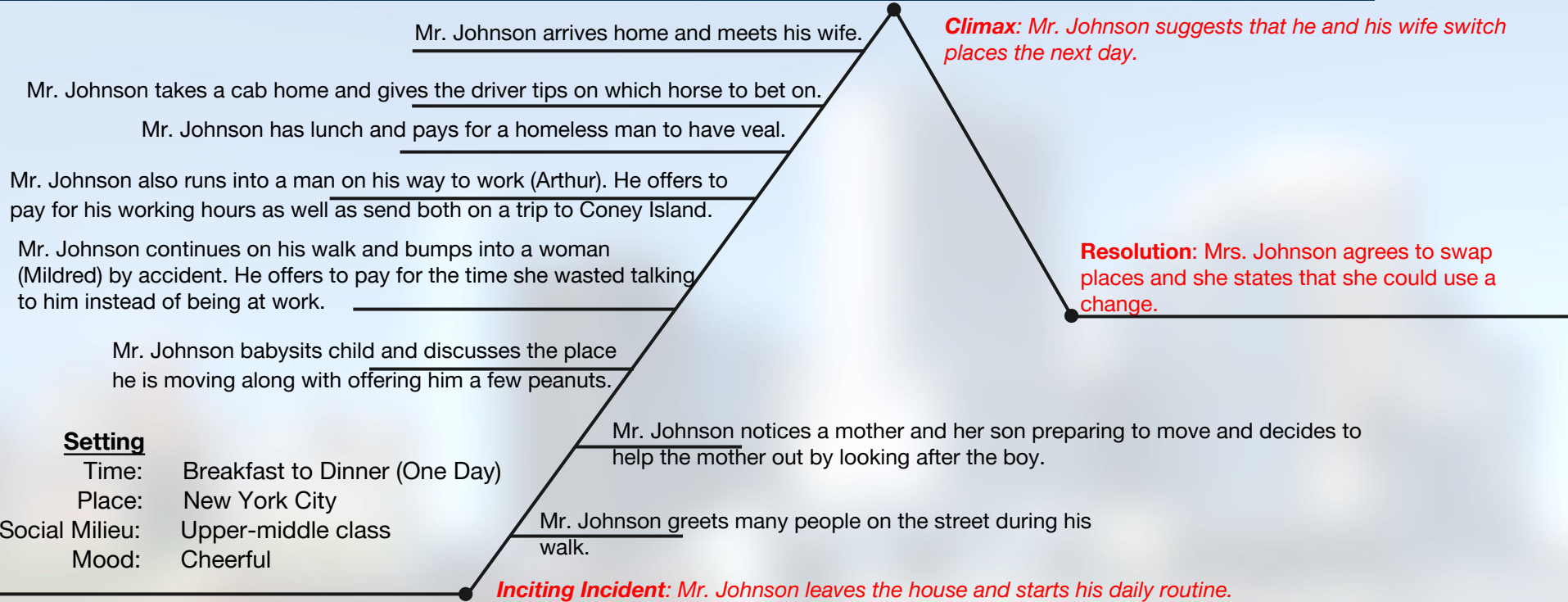
# Summary

- He gives money to a homeless man to buy lunch. He also meets a taxi driver who has lost a bet. Mr. Johnson gives the taxi driver his money lost and gives him advice on bets.
- Mr. Johnson goes home to his wife and tells her about his day, while she does the same. Her day was the complete opposite. Mr. Johnson was so nice and generous, while his wife was rude and nasty to everyone.

# Summary

- The couple decides the next day they will switch jobs, Mrs. Johnson will be nice to everyone, while Mr. Johnson will be rude.

# Plot Diagram



## Setting

Time: Breakfast to Dinner (One Day)

Place: New York City

Social Milieu: Upper-middle class

Mood: Cheerful

## Characters:

John Philip Johnson (Mr. Johnson) - Kind, Helpful, Cheerful, Positive (helps many people throughout day)

Mrs. Johnson (Mr. Johnson's wife) - Pessimist, Negative, Inconsiderate (constantly sees the worst in things and passes view to others)

Additionally: Mother and son, Mildred Kent, Arthur Adams, Cab Driver

# Point of View

- Omniscient Third Person
- The story is told from a third person not known by the audience and is omniscient because it can read the thoughts of the characters.

# Point of View

- The point of view is important because it allows us to read the thoughts of all the characters.
- In first person we would be able to read the thoughts of only one character, so this allows flexibility.



# Point of View

- Ex. on page 3, the story switches from Mr. Johnson's conversation to the mother's thoughts.

# Use of red-herring



- The whole story is a red herring
- Mr. Johnson's actions deceive the reader into thinking he is nice
- At the end, readers find he is actually just doing his job of either being nice or mean

# Symbol

## Angel/Devil

- Angel and Devil concept - Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's job is being an angel or the devil to everyone they meet on the street
- represents a balance and that there is good and bad in everyday life
- Mr. Johnson asks if his wife is she wants to switch jobs the next day because she looked worn out, meaning nobody wants to be the bad guy all the time

# Theme

- For every good person out there, there is a bad person to balance it out.

## Explanation:

- In the city, New York, there are all types of people.
- Mr. and Mrs. Johnson balance each other out, good and evil, to keep the city neutral.

# Rating



## Pros

- Climax and reveal of Mrs. Johnson's character was unexpected and interesting
- Many different characters and conflicts to solve - keeps reader engaged
- Feel-good and cheerful mood throughout story

# Rating



## Cons

- Slow and uninteresting beginning/exposition
- Main character remains flat and doesn't change until the very end

# Works Cited

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