



The Lottery Game

Gerard Shirar

iUniverse (Mar 11, 2020)

Hardcover \$34.99 (298pp)

978-1-5320-9612-9

Poignant observations on aging punctuate the novel The Lottery Game, in which good intentions lead to disaster.

A mild-mannered retiree takes the fall in a tax evasion scheme in Gerard Shirar's mystery novel *The Lottery Game*.

After his wife's death, Pete sells their house and moves to Brook Haven, a home for seniors. He meets plenty of interesting people, but he still feels bored and restless. When a slick new resident comes forward with an exciting charitable opportunity, Pete accepts, despite harboring reservations. He starts having second thoughts almost immediately, not realizing that he is already in too deep to escape.

Pete narrates the first part of the story, relating how he was duped into the operation and sharing his attempts to alternately get out of it and find out the truth behind it. Leslie, an assistant attorney, narrates the second part, retelling Pete's story from the perspective of someone who helped bring down the scam—and put Pete behind bars. Pete returns for the final portions of the book to finish the tale and tie up loose ends.

The story is slow to start. Pete spends several chapters describing his early, uneventful days at Brook Haven. Much time is devoted to introducing interesting events that play no role in the larger story. Repetitive language and extraneous details continue to slow the pace throughout.

Pete is sympathetic as he's unfairly targeted by dangerous international criminals and a legal system more concerned with convenience than justice. He is naïve, as he himself admits, but good-natured: he always tries to look on the bright side. His earnest narration is punctuated by bits of unexpected humor and poignant musings on aging.

Pete finds a friend in Marge, a fellow Brook Haven resident and former lawyer whose loyalty and perspicacity are Pete's only points of refuge as he strives to figure out the truth. The masterminds behind the scam are affable villains, expressing concern even while executing violent punishments and taking advantage of vulnerable populations. Their scheme is intricate, consisting of many steps and spanning two continents, but is at heart very direct: cheat the lottery and get out quick, leaving their well-meaning stooge to take the blame.

Lengthy, expository speeches lead to repeated information, but the book's conclusion is hopeful and realistic. Pete, despite his circumstances, remains optimistic to the end, accepting his probable fate, though wishing to be granted just one miracle.

In the novel *The Lottery Game*, even the best of intentions can lead to disaster.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (June 16, 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.