

Topic: How are "The Lottery" and "The Possibility of Evil" similar?

"The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson is about a small town's tradition of stoning one of its citizens to death. "The Possibility of Evil" also by Shirley Jackson is about an old woman who sends anonymous letters identifying the evil she sees in her town. These two stories share certain similarities. The main similarity is that the characters are blinded by their traditions. In "The Lottery," citizens gather in the town square and ultimately decide who is going to die. Similar to a raffle, everyone is included, and anyone can win. The black box holds everyone's name in it and one by one, each person is eliminated from death. When the black dot appears on someone's name, they are singled out for stoning. While the characters involved argue and try to get out of death, "the people had done it so many times, that they had only half listened to the directions" before throwing the first stone. In "The Possibility of Evil" Miss Strangeworth writes anonymous letters to the townspeople in hopes of awakening "the possibility of evil lurking nearby." She sincerely believes that it is her duty to alert her town to the evil going on. She believes that her town "had to be kept clean and sweet, but people everywhere were lustful and evil and degraded, and needed to be watched; the world was so large and there was only one Strangeworth left in it." Clearly, both stories are similar in that their characters follow traditions blindly without question or remorse.