Symbolism In Short Stories

Symbolism is when the use of symbols are used to represent ideas and qualities. I will be explaining how my three short stories involve symbolism. Effective and powerful use of symbolism can easily be seen in the classic short stories “The Possibility of Evil’,” The Lottery”, and “Harrison Bergeron”.

In “The Possibility of Evil” Shirley Jackson used symbolism with Mrs. Strangeworth’s roses, the roses represented the meaning of beauty. A rose is a beautiful flower, but its thorns can cause some type of hurt. Mrs. Strangeworth is described as an elegant old woman and is known for her lovely red, white, and pink roses. Her roses are her pride and joy, when tourists come into the small town they always stop and admired her roses. Some may even ask her if they could take some back home with them, but she always said no because she doesn't know where they were going and if they'd be taken care of. She is a woman of deep tradition and believes those roses belong on pleasant street and nowhere else. Yet, Miss Strangeworth hides her petty and cruel spirit behind her lovely attitude. She secretly writes unkind letters to those who she believes are in need of her unwanted opinion and her self centered advice. One day, she accidentally dropped one of her letters and a young man decided to take it upon himself to deliver the note and say that is was from Mrs. Strangeworth which wasn’t a good thing. The next day she’d gotten an anonymous letter in the mail that read “Look out at what used to be your roses”.

In the short story “The Lottery” Shirley Jackson uses symbolism, the black box representsthe tradition of the lottery. The black box is nearly falling apart, hardly even black anymore after years of use and storage, but the villagers are not wanting to replace it because if it’s true meaning. They base their lives on nothing more than a story that claims that this black box was made from pieces of another, older black box. The lottery is filled with things from the past that have supposedly been passed down from earlier days, such as the creation of family lists and use of stones. These are part of the tradition, from which no one wants to get rid of. The lottery must take place in just this way because this is how it’s always been done. However, other lottery traditions have been changed or forgotten. The villagers use slips of paper instead of wood chips, for example. There is no reason why the villagers should be loyal to the black box yet disloyal to other artifacts and traditions, just as there is no logical reason why the villagers should continue holding the lottery at all.

In the short story “Harrison Bergeron” Kurt Vonnegut used symbolism when Harrison Bergeron represents the spark of resistance and individuality that still exists. He has none of the cowardice and acceptance that personality wise nearly everyone else has in the story. Even though, he is an exaggerated macho man, a towering, brave, breathtaking man who thrives for power. When he makes his dramatic entrance nto the TV studio and announces that he is the emperor, the greatest ruler who has ever lived, he sounds powerful and even insane. At the same time, however, his boastfulness is exhilarating. It is an exaggerated expression of the uncooperative urge to excel that some may still feel. When Harrison rips off his steel restraints and handicaps, the physical strength and beauty he reveals reminds some viewers that underneath their own restraints and handicaps, they too are still talented or lovely. But in the end, Harrison, symbol of defiance, is killed in cold blood by Diana Moon Glampers, the

administrator of government power.

Effective and powerful use of symbolism can easily be seen in the classic short stories “The Possibility of Evil’,” The Lottery”, and “Harrison Bergeron”. When these amazing authors decided to use such strong symbolic reasoning in there short story it actually does show how effective and powerful their meanings really are.