

Sample LRJ:
"The Possibility of Evil"

By: Shirley Jackson

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1A: Miss Strangeworth - DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

- "She knew everyone in town..."
- "...she never spent more than a day outside this town..."
- "...she sometimes found herself thinking that the town belonged to her."
- "I've watched my town grow..." (174)
- These examples all show DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION of Miss Strangeworth. The narrator is straight out telling us that she's been in the town so long, she feels it belongs to her. **This tells us she is very proud of where she's from and she's very particular, almost possessive, of the town - as if it's her own personal property.**

4M: "Miss Strangeworth never gave away any of her roses..." (174).

- This gesture, or lack of gesture, shows how possessive Miss Strangeworth is and how much she likes to maintain control. She wouldn't even cut roses for the new minister in town.

4M: "When she picked her roses at all, she set them in bowls...inside of the house her grandfather had built" (174).

- This selfish gesture with her roses further shows Miss Strangeworth's attitude of her own self-worth in comparison to those in her community

4L, 4M: "Miss Strangeworth had to stop every minute or so to say good morning to someone or to ask after someone's health" (174).

- This shows she relates to others with concern - neighborly affection
- As far as speech mannerisms - she appears to be a pleasant, old woman, who is a well known artifact in the town
- This is significant to how she relates with others through her speech mannerisms because it shows how she appears to feel about her neighbors - her actions show she cares and is genuinely concerned for them and their well-being

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4L, 4M: "...the day young Lewis left high school and went to work at the grocery, Miss Strangeworth had stopped calling him Tommy and started calling him Mr. Lewis" (175).

- In regards to interaction with others and speech mannerisms, this shows Miss Strangeworth to be an old fashioned woman in terms of respect and manners
- This shows Miss Strangeworth disconnects herself from people, personally. Her interaction with her neighbors, and people she's known since she was in school, is strictly left to friendly interactions that don't seem to go beyond "small talk"

4L: "Are those strawberries from Arthur Parker's garden? They're early this year" (175).

- This comment by Miss Strangeworth gives further indication to her interaction with others because it shows how closely she pays attention to everyone and everything in "her town." She knew exactly whose garden the strawberries came from, and could remember from year's past, that it's seasonably early for his strawberries to be ready. She seems like a nice old lady asking how they're doing, but she doesn't seem to miss ANYTHING.

4M: "Mr. Lewis looked worried, she thought..." (175).

- This internal speech of Miss Strangeworth shows even further how involved she likes to be with people in the community. She's reading expressions on Mr. Lewis' face and determining he's worried, when he has given her no outward indication of such. She even thinks about saying something to him, but realizes the comment would be too personal, so she keeps her mouth shut, but her mind is digging into his business!

4L: "It's Tuesday, Mr. Lewis. You forgot to remind me...Imagine your forgetting..." (175).

- She apparently orders her tea on Tuesdays, and since she pays such close attention to the mannerisms of everyone around her, she apparently thinks she should get some of the same attention. However, this attention is obviously on something that everyone could see...not something that people could formulate their own speculations about in their minds...like her thoughts when she "notices" something about someone.

4L: "Her hand shook slightly...Miss Strangeworth wondered...if she had been taking proper care of herself" (175).

- This is again showing Miss Strangeworth's relation with the people in her community because she is noticing small changes in Mrs. Harper's mannerisms and she is again, automatically assuming something is wrong.
 - She seems to be making a lot of negative judgments about people without speaking to them for any validity.

4M: "Martha, you don't look well" (175).

- Now...not only is Miss Strangeworth making her judgments in her mind, she's voicing them as a concern, and Martha's negative response seems to only validate these thoughts for Miss Strangeworth
- Not so sure these comments are "concerns" or just being nosy, trying to gain information about the lives of her neighbors...that should be none of her business.

4H: "...stopped to smile down on the Crane baby...the two most infatuated young parents...she thought indulgently" (175).

- This is clearly showing the complexity of Miss Strangeworth's character. She is acting concerned and friendly to people's faces, but in her mind, she is very judgmental and rude.
- Clearly, her "good mornings" and "how's your health" comments have motive...not just kind words