

# Essay summary of a good man is hard to find

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



A Good Man is Hard to Find Flannery O'Connor's story, A Good Man is Hard to Find, brings a story in which she connects her experience as a victim of lupus erythematosus with her writings. The story begins with an ordinary family that embarks on a journey that becomes the last of their lives as the journey approaches to an end, as well as their imminent death, yet something astounding happens with the main character. The main character, the Grandmother, changes her heart by the cruel ways of the "Misfit", who is a criminal that escaped from the penitentiary.

One might think that Grandmothers are sweet and loving, and often innocent due to their advanced age and condition. We, as society, think of them as great examples of people that radiate love, mentors, and defenders of morality and good manners. However, this is not the case in A Good Man Is Hard to Find, by Flannery O'Connor. As the story unfolds, her personality reflects that hidden evil we all carry inside and how detouring on a route takes a whole family to face disastrous consequences, yet one person finds redemption from that evil.

A Good Man Is Hard to Find is a story that symbolizes redemption, because there is a sinner, there is a journey, and there is redemption. In our society we tend to minimize, and sometimes erase the word "sin" because, for the most part, it bothers people's conscience. Although the word "sin" is not explicitly exposed in the story A Good Man is Hard to Find, the action and consequences of sin are vividly present throughout the story, in all the characters, especially the Grandmother.

The main character and sinner in the story is the Grandmother because she is described as an egocentric person, since the situation they face is that

<https://assignbuster.com/essay-summary-of-a-good-man-is-hard-to-find/>

they are all captives of the serial killer, "The Misfit", and she bargains for her life only. The grandmother said, "You wouldn't shoot a lady, would you?" (Flannery O'Connor 313). This is an obvious example of how she doesn't stop to think about the rest of her family. In addition, one might think that in various occasions the Grandmother makes simple comments that compare different times of her life, the present and how things used to be.

On the other hand, Grandmothers' comments represent the comparison between the dark past of society and the reality that it hasn't changed much. During the trip, Grandmother makes a comment that reflects her comparisons; she said "In my time, children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else. People did right then" (Flannery O'Connor 308). In the same scene, Grandmother contradicts herself by saying, "Little niggers in the country don't have things like we do.

If I could paint, I'd paint that picture," (Flannery O'Connor 308). No argument, she is a barefaced hypocrite. Furthermore, the way she dressed to go on a road trip, as the author describes the grandmother, "Had on a navy blue straw sailor hat with a bunch of white violets on a brim and a navy dress with a small white dot on print." (Flannery O'Connor 307). Also, her jewelry "her collars and cuffs were white organdy trimmed with lace and her neckline she had pinned a purple spray of cloth violets containing a sachet. (Flannery O'Connor 307). Her exaggerated outfit, plus the extreme jewelry for a road trip reflects her ego and her desire to be noticed as a lady. Whether one believes in God, or not, we all embark on the journey of life, in which we experience an inner transformation. Any journey has a destination; however, decisions made during the trip may alter the destination and its

outcome. Flannery O'Connor uses the road trip to represent the pilgrimage Grandmother and her family must go through.

Since the beginning of the trip, Grandmother took unnecessary stuff, " her big black valise that looked like a head of a hippopotamus", and her mascot " Pitty Sing, the cat" (Flannery O'Connor 307), knowing that this action will incommode the family and eventually be a factor of the cause of the accident. One might think that the baggage represents only inconvenience; nonetheless, this represents ones' regrets or transgressions that haven't been forgiven nor forgotten. During the trip, the Grandmother makes an important remark about her past when she used to date Mr.

Teagarden by saying, " She would of have done well to marry Mr. Teagarden because he was a gentleman and had bought Coca-Cola stock when first came out and that he had died only a few years ago, a very wealthy man. " (Flannery O'Connor 309). It shows her nostalgia and regret of not marrying that man but it certainly also shows her ambition. She evidently hasn't experienced true love. Thus, it certainly shows that her baggage did not consist only of clothing and jewelry, but of nostalgia and regret. In addition, the same illusion of her romance with Mr.

Teagarden triggered the inner desire in her dream to go visit the plantation and the house where, as Grandmother said, " You sat down with your suitor after a stroll in the garden. " (Flannery O'Connor 311). Eventually, in a self-centered act, she " craftily" (Flannery O'Connor 311) lies, causing the detouring of the route. They have taken a dangerous dirty road, as the author describes it " was hilly and there were sudden washes in it and sharp curves on dangerous embankments" (Flannery O'Connor 312).

As a result, while driving on that dangerous road, the accident happened due to Grandmother's recklessness. This situation metaphors the choices one makes in life and their consequences. The accident is just a sign of how one falls through the journey. There could not be a redemption story without a Savior, and a sinner to whom needs to be redeemed. After the accident, everyone got out of the car and saw the car approaching far away, " on top of a hill", giving the sense that help is coming from above, which in a Biblical way, is symbolically showing that help is coming from heaven.

In addition, when they arrived, " the Misfit" gets out, standing in front of them, " looking down at them" (Flannery O'Connor 313). He is accompanied by two fellows; one wearing a " shirt with a silver stallion". All of these details represent a Redeemer, or a Godly figure. In addition, the Redeemer quickly finds who is in need to be redeemed when Grandmother makes a terrible mistake by recognizing the criminal " You're the Misfit" she said (Flannery O'Connor 313).

At this point, she has commended her whole family and The Misfit confirms that saying " it would have been better for all of you, lady, if you hadn't reckernized me. " (Flannery O'Connor 313). Grandmother responds, " You wouldn't shoot a lady, would you? " (Flannery O'Connor 313). This action confirms the Misfit that she is the sinner who hasn't repented from all her sins since she reflects the egocentrism of worrying about her life only, without any given thought about the whole family, not even the children.

The Misfit uses the desperation and impotence of the lady to make her realize that there is no escape from the inevitable. As he starts killing the family using the help from his assistants, Grandmother starts to appeal to

the Misfit's heart by saying, " You've got good blood! I know you wouldn't shoot a lady! " (Flannery O'Connor 316). As the other half of the family was killed, Grandmother tells the Misfit, " You are one of my own children" (Flannery O'Connor 317) appealing that he would feel loved and would let her live.

Nonetheless, she got shot and the Misfit said, " She would have been a good woman, if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life. " (Flannery O'Connor 317). This is the vivid example of redemption because in order to know good, and be good, we must face that adversary that puts one to the test and pulls out the good from within. One might relate to the Grandmothers' feelings of impotence and desperation because when suffering, or facing death, one realizes the true beauty of life and its richness that most of the time are unnoticed due to one's blindness from sin.

In conclusion, A Goodman is Hard to Find is a story that symbolizes redemption because there is a sinner, there is a journey, and there is redemption. As the story unfolds, her personality reflects that hidden evil we all carry inside and how a route's detour takes a whole family to face disastrous consequences, yet one person finds redemption from that evil. One might think that Grandmothers are all sweet, loving, often innocent, mentors, and defenders of morality and good manners. Nonetheless, this was not the case in this story.