

The misfit and the miss-fit



Lewis, Anthony Dr. Sherry Forkum English 1A, Midterm 13 March 2013 The Misfit and the " Miss-Fit" Flannery O'Connor is an author who has written a score of short stories; however the author is remembered for one story in particular. The story revolved around a family that had problems just like any other normal family. This family's problem was respecting each other and communication. The Family is taking a vacation to Florida when a longing for a stroll down memory lane hits the grandmother, who wants to see a house she had been to before.

As the family approaches its destination, an accident takes place that leaves the family stranded on a dirt road where they meet the Misfit, an escaped convict from prison. The misfit would have helped the family out in getting the car working again, but the grandmother had to say " You're The Misfit!... I recognized you at once! (O'Connor, Flannery ¶81)", getting the whole family massacred because the Misfit could not have any witnesses able to report a location of his whereabouts. Although this story sounds straightforward, there are some ironic twists discovering who the real Misfit of this story is for example.

In O'Connor's short story, A Good Man is Hard to Find, O'Connor writes to depict the true " miss-fit" in the story to be the grandmother. Red Sammy and his wife were symbolic of the best of mankind. The couple was the epitome of what normal citizens would call good-natured people. Red Sammy gave assistance to a couple of gentlemen that needed gas. When the guys told Sammy a bit about themselves, Sammy gave them a helping hand, and generously offered to give them gas on credit. The gentlemen stiffed Sammy the money they owed him and gave indecency in return. The grand-mother,

Red Sammy, and his wife discuss the evil nature of the times and decide that, although they themselves may be good people, ' a good man is hard to find. '(" O'Connor's Short Stories: Summary and Analysis: " A Good Man Is Hard to Find"" ¶12)" On top of being a very generous man, Sammy also symbolized a sort of warning for the family. " I felt 'Red Sammy' represented a type of prophet in the story, speaking to the Grandmother directly about how trust was becoming dissolute He was the family's 'red flag (Lucy Tonic ¶ 12)".

All the talk of dishonest people is extremely ironic since the family gets into an accident and find out that help was found in none other than the Misfit and a couple of other convicts. In A Good Man is Hard to find, Bailey and his wife were not the two most powerful people in this story, they are very easy to manipulate and they let people walk all over them. They did not even have a large role to play in the story. Their characters were put in the story to build suspense during the conversation between the Misfit and the grandmother.

This build up let the readers feel like the grandmother may have a chance to be spared. " It's not far from here, I know," the grandmother said. " It wouldn't take over twenty minutes. " Bailey was looking straight ahead. His jaw was as rigid as a horseshoe. " No," he said (O'Connor, Flannery ¶48-49). This man is letting his kids behave like little brats allowing them to scream and yell for far too long before he whips the car to the side of the road to yell at the kids to shut up. Although the parents may have been incompetent in raising their children they, like their infant child, should not have had to suffer their fate.

The children in the story, although obnoxious and completely disrespectful to all the characters, also play a role that is inherent behavior to most kids. Kids have mostly acted with bad manners and disrespect in the past because the lesson has not been learned that respect is essential to living in society. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach the meaning of respect and general manners to children. June Star, the daughter of Bailey and the mother, is a downright disrespectful little brat that needs to be taught the most about manners and appropriate comments to strangers.

The girl has no boundaries in place because it is obvious the parents do not have a discipline routine, and the parents just get rolled over by the children. " Though she's cute, she's just plain nasty to everybody, as learned pretty early on in the story from the way she treats her grandmother (" June Star. " ¶1)". John Wesley, the son of Bailey and the mother, is similar to June Star however not as ruthless a character. This is because between the Grandmother and June there is little time to be on the same playing field in respect to cold-heartedness.

The baby is by far the most innocent character in the story. This is because the baby is still a newborn that does not have the brain development to act based on its current knowledge. " The baby's sleeping when it's shot...it's the easiest member of the family for whom we feel sorry (" The Baby" ¶1)". This is because the baby never even had a chance and died all because the Grandmother made an idiotic comment to a convicted felon ensuring the family's fate. The Misfit and his posse are a small group of outlaws who broke out of jail and are attempting to remain hidden from the authorities.

Albeit an individual who is looked down upon by society for committing heinous crimes, throughout the story the Misfit plays the role of a convict with a sense of acceptance towards being a bad man. " If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away everything and follow Him, and if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness. (" A Good Man is Hard to Find" ¶136)"

This illustrates the Misfit's persona and shows that he does not care about taking another's life in order to give his life a purpose. Due to the behavior and the overall actions, the Misfit fits the role of the convict character therefore could not be considered the true misfit. Throughout the conversation with the grandmother, the Misfit seems to be a polite gentleman regardless of his misdeeds. "' I'm sorry I don't have on a shirt before you ladies," he said, hunching his shoulders slightly (O'Connor, Flannery, ¶100)".

This shows that he is not a terrible person and he probably just got caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, but at this point he has accepted his fate as a bad man on the run. The Grandmother, not ever mentioned by name in the story, is the absolute shadiest character of all. The Grandmother has this holier than thou attitude that could not be more wrong. Not only is she hypocritical but also a master manipulator as well. The Grandmother tries to get her way by using news clippings of the Misfit's escape as a reason that the family should take a trip to Tennessee instead of Florida. " The grandmother says that '[she] wouldn't take [her] children in any direction with a criminal

like [the Misfit] aloose in it. [She] couldn't answer to her conscious if [she] did. ' Ironically, this is exactly what she does when she tempts her family into visiting the old house (Krista ¶36). " Although the Grandmother's initial idea of taking the trip in Tennessee would have been better, the intentions of going to Tennessee, however, were strictly selfish.

She manipulated the kids into thinking that there was a house with secret panels that held untold amounts of hidden family treasure so that Bailey would turn the car around to go and visit the old house. This action was the final straw that led the family down a road that would lead them directly into the path of the Misfit. As the family drove down the dirt road that led to the house with the " treasure" the senile old lady suddenly came to the realization that the house the family was driving to, was not in Georgia, but in Tennessee instead. The thought was so embarrassing that she turned red in the face and her eyes dilated and her feet jumped up, upsetting her valise in the corner. The instant the valise moved, the newspaper top she had over the basket under it rose with a snarl and Pitty Sing, the cat, sprang onto Bailey's shoulder (O'Connor, Flannery ¶63)". The Grandmother freaked out causing Bailey to drive off the road and flip the car around. Throughout the story all of the characters commit actions or make comments that make everybody in the story sound insane. The Misfit and his gang all commit atrocious crimes and have no remorse about committing those crimes.

The children both act like spawns of Satan, throwing temper tantrums to get what they want, being disrespectful to others and to the family as well. Red Sammy and his wife, is a couple that is very rapidly losing hope for all people in the world thinking that there is no decency left in mankind. The

Grandmother, however, takes the cake so to speak on being in denial about who she is as a person. She thinks she is above the rest of the characters in overall behavior as far as common courtesy. This makes her the worst character in the story because she is an evil character that hides behind this facade of a good person.

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