

Good and evil in a
good man is hard to
find by flannery
o'connor



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Good and Evil

The world is made up of two different types of people: the good and the evil. In the book "A Good Man is Hard to Find." By Flannery O'Connor Grandma and the misfit demonstrate the central theme good versus evil. Since the beginning of humankind, there has been one unsolved issue, and that is good versus evil. It is an issue we see every day in the Newspaper, Television, Social media, etc. There is certainly evil in the world today. However, the good outweighs the evil. "No matter how hard Evil tries, it can never quite match up to the power of Good, because Evil is ultimately self-destructive. Evil may set out to corrupt others, but in the process corrupts itself." (Connolly, 2011)

Is there such a thing as good and evil? Most of us go through our lives trying to be what we consider good. What is good? Is there such a thing? How does one describe good and evil? Throughout time people have asked this age-old question. The Holy Bible says. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." Matthew 12: 35 (NIV Holy Bible, 2011). What does this mean? A good man does good things, and an evil man does evil things. Flannery O'Connor labels the grandmother as good, and the Misfit as evil.

There is no such thing as a perfect human being. However, most good people have a conscience and decent morals. Evil people yet have no conscience or guilt as the Misfit and grandmother demonstrated in the book. Being good or evil is not determined on how you were raised, what kind of family you come from, it is based on the choices and actions you make in

life. Everyone has a choice. We are all born good with a blank slate. It is what we chose to do with that slate that matters. Our actions speak louder than words. We humans can say we are good on the inside, but unless we do good deeds, help others, and make the world a better place, we are not truly good people. Our human nature is to be good. We tend to be sympathetic and caring. We know the difference between right and wrong. Unfortunately, when faced with anger we may act out in evil ways. Our society and the environment we live in affects the way we act.

The grandmother is labeled a good person because she is the glue that holds the family together. She parents the children, and she always does the right thing. She has traditional beliefs and is a proud woman. She acts as a southern-women should for this period. Because of these traits, she would never admit if she was wrong. She comes from a family “ with good people,” and has good manners. The grandmother follows her conscience, and all good people follow their conscience.

On the other side, you could label the grandmother as a bad person. She is a racist, loud mouth, self-centered, holier than thou, judgmental, and old fashioned. She tends to live in the past. Everything was better in the past. People used to be good. You could leave the house unlocked. You could be carefree. She could be blamed for the death of her entire family. She snuck the cat along that caused the father to crash the car. She took them the wrong way and led them to the misfit. Her big mouth recognized the misfit which made him kill the family. These are all things that potentially put the family at risk.

Everyone has their flaws. The Misfit is labeled as evil in the story. The Misfit is a murdering convict seeking pleasure through causing pain to others. He seems purely evil and does not seem to have a sense of guilt. He has a desire to be destructive and is genuinely cruel, and he does these things for his own sake. He lacks a sense of right and wrong. He believes the punishment never fits the crime. He has just escaped from federal prison where he served time for killing his father. He claims he did not do it. " I forget what I done, lady. I set there and set there, trying to remember what it was I done and I ain't recalled it to this day. Once in a while, I would think it was coming to me, but it never come." (Mays, 2017) It is unlikely a criminal such as the Misfit cannot remember what crime he committed to get sent to prison in the first place. His not " remembering" goes to show that he does not believe his past actions are wrong. He seems not to take the crime he committed seriously. None of the crimes seem wrong to him. This goes to show that an evil person does not have a sense of guilt. The crimes committed did not affect the misfit at all because they did not " matter" to him or they mattered so little it was possible to forget. He gets the name misfit because he believes the crimes do not match the punishment.

We could also label the misfit as good. Is he an angel of mercy? He has a heightened sense of awareness and, in some ways, more thoughtful than the grandma. He seems very aware of religion and comes across as someone who has thought a lot about god and religion. " Bad guys" commit crimes such as destroying things and killing people because there is nothing else for them to do. They do not believe in right and wrong and destroying, torturing, and hurting others gives them pleasure. " Shut up, Bobby Lee," The Misfit

said. "It is no real pleasure in life." (Mays, 2017) There seems to be a transformation with the misfit. He did not feel pleasure from killing the grandma. That means it affected him. This was his moment of transformation from evil to good.

"I wish I had been there," he said, hitting the ground with his fist. "It ain't right I was not there because if I had been there I would of known. Listen lady," he said in a high voice, "if I had of been there I would of known, and I would not be like I am now." (Mays, 2017) Had the misfit had real faith he would not be the person he is. He does not want to be the way he is. He shows us a new side to him. It is the first time the misfit is showing us his vulnerability. It is making the reader question if he is truly a bad person.

Do not be shallow and judgmental. All humans are flawed. We need not to be so quick to judge others harshly. Empathy is an important trait. Time always moves forward. If we do not move with time, we are doomed. We will probably never figure out what good and evil are, and if there is such a thing. People will come to their conclusion on what it means to them based on their values. There is no good and evil, there is only power and those too weak to seek it." (Rowling, 1997)

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" is an intense story. One of the most significant pieces of literature. It leaves you thinking who the good person in this story is? Is it the Misfit or is it the grandmother? In so many ways they both have good and evil within them. We humans are caring, kind, giving, and loving, but we are also selfish, greedy, and evil. What is good and what is evil is continuously changing depending on culture, and the times. Because we all

fall somewhere between giving and greedy, kind and selfish, and loving and evil we can not say as a whole that humans are good or bad by nature. Without good, there can be no evil. Without evil, there can be no good. Humans have always been and will always remain in constant evolution.

Works Cited

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