

# Example of short story analysis essay

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Flannery O'Connor is a unique writer that succeeded to combine humor and horror in a manner that is unusual for a female writer. In her short story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" O'Connor intrigued readers with unexpected events and ambiguous characters that are difficult to analyze. She brought up an important theme of good and bad, human grace, and justice. Her personages are bright being described with detachment and clarity. Her ability to apply grotesque is fantastic.

It is difficult to distinguish between the most and the least sympathetic characters in the story written by Flannery O'Connor A Good Man Is Hard to Find. The principal characters of the story possess a number of features that contribute to their ambiguity. Who is the least sympathetic: a selfish old lady or an escaped convict Misfit? Other characters fade against a background of these two personages.

The Grandmother is not a very sympathetic character, but in comparison to Misfit she is. Flannery O'Connor depicted an old annoying lady using the mix of tragic and comic expressions that is inherent in her writing manner. The expression "she had her big black valise that looked like the head of a hippopotamus in one corner" reveals sarcastic notes showing negative attitude to the character (O'Connor, n. p.).

O'Connor (n. p.) criticized the apparel of the old lady saying that "in case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once that she was a lady" showing the attitude towards her. Pushy Grandmother insisted on visiting her home where she spent her childhood. The trip resulted in the death of the whole family. Her cat jumped to her son's shoulder when he was driving a car causing car accident. The episode with

the cat adds to negative attitude towards Grandmother.

The attitude to other people adds a lot to the description of Grandmother's personality. She is very critical to her daughter-in-law whose insignificance was constantly emphasized. She also revealed racist moods and disdainful attitude towards other people when calling a black child " a pickaninny" (O'Connor, n. p.).

Definitely, the Grandmother is not a sympathetic person. Even the Misfit looks much more sympathetic in some episodes than she does. The Misfit is a criminal who killed the whole family at the end of the story. The author described him as a tanned man in white shoes without a shirt wearing glasses " that gave him a scholarly look" (O'Connor, n. p.). Judging by his speech he is uneducated, but aims to be polite with the Grandmother and others. He notified in advance that " it would have been better for all of you, lady, if you hadn't reckernized me" in order to let the Grandmother understand what to expect from him (O'Connor, n. p.).

The Misfit is a contradictory personage who believes in god despite of the style of his life. His life of punishment does not fit the crimes he committed. During the long dialog he opened his soul to the Grandmother that did not help her avoid being killed by him. When Misfit unburdened his soul telling Grandmother about his father, mistreatments towards him, and injustices of the world, he stands up in one's mind as a victim.

Who is more sympathetic in this story: the Grandmother who knew about escaped convicts and proceeded to insist on the trip jeopardizing her family or the Misfit who used to kill aiming to restore justice? Who is to blame – those who kill us every day by fierce critic and annoying comments or those

who stop our sufferings by one shot?

The Misfit seemed to know people good when said " She would have been a good woman if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (O'Connor, n. p.). He felt that Grandmother's grace was a result of extreme situation.

The Grandmother is more sympathetic than the Misfit simply because she is not able to kill. However, from the story one can see that this woman had been spoiling the life of her son and his family every day. The Grandmother has an unpleasant personality – selfish, critical, and pushy with family, but miserable facing criminals to save her life.

The Misfit personality is simpler. At least, he is predictable showing his intentions and unveiling his soul. He is not a sympathetic person at all. However, some of his traits are worth attention. The Misfit is totally disappointed. Killing other people is the only way for him to express his protest against injustice and mistreatment.

In his critical review Rubin stated that " Knowledge of good and evil is at the heart of her stories" meaning O'Connor's story A Good Man Is Hard to Find (675). O'Connor criticized her short story in an essay explaining that Grandmother was interpreted as a witch while the Misfit was interpreted as a fallen prophet (Votteler, n. p.). She also criticized on her story that " there are perhaps other ways than my own in which could be read, but none other by which it could have been written" (Votteler, n. p.).

## **Works Cited**

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