

# Informative essay on a good man is hard to find by flannery o`connor

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In "A Good Man is Hard to Find", by Flannery O'Connor, the theme is grace, the idea that nothing we do can save us from our own faults. In the beginning of the story, the grandmother talks about how you cannot even trust anybody in the world, while she is actually being more untrustworthy than those of the world. After reading the story, you can see how her actions and her words are ironic because she is actually lying and cheating the family. Analyzing the characters, setting, and irony of the story, we can see how trust is a major issue throughout the story and how they have a rather dysfunctional family.

In "A Good Man is Hard to Find," the characters are important because their thoughts and actions mold together and make the story what it is. If there were one character missing, the story would not be the same. The mother is a character that hardly plays any role, and hardly ever says anything. Also, in the wreck, the mother was the only one who got hurt. The main thing the mother does is take care of the baby. With that being said, the character of the baby is mostly just to take up the mother's attention. Also, taking some of the grandmother's attention when she holds the baby in her lap for only a few minutes during the ride.

June Star is Bailey's daughter. Throughout the story, we learn that she is a rather disrespectful little girl. She makes rude remarks to everyone like "I wouldn't live in a broken-down place like this for a million bucks" (O'Connor, 408) to Red Sam's wife when talking to the baby. For the most part, she is just a bothersome little girl. Her brother, John Wesley, is almost just as bad. During the story, he mostly torments the grandmother and kicks the father's

seat repeatedly throughout the whole car ride. He, along with June Star, is disappointed when they realize there were no fatalities in the car accident.

Red Sam is the restaurant owner where the family stopped to eat. Red Sam states, “ a good man is hard to find” (409), when explaining to the grandmother about the men who never paid their tab. He wants to see the good in everybody, but explains, “ Everything is getting terrible. I remember the day you could go off and leave your screen door unlatched. Not no more.” (409) Bailey is the grandmother’s only son. He is June Star and John Wesley’s father, also the driver of the car. Bailey likes to think that he is in control of everything, when in reality he is not.

He lets the grandmother persuade him into going to Tennessee instead of Florida, where he had primarily intended on taking his family. Bailey and John Wesley are one of the first the get shot after the accident. The grandmother in the story is rather manipulative. From the beginning to the end, she is constantly nagging and talking the family into different plans. Not only is she this way towards the family, but she also tries to talk the Misfit out of killing her and tries to convince him that he is a good boy. She does so by saying things like “ You’ve got good blood! I know you wouldn’t shoot a lady!

I know you come from nice people...” (415). Also, the grandmother is very conceited; an example would be when the narrator says, “ In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once she was a lady” (406). The grandmother is so tied up with herself that she doesn’t want to admit when she is wrong, when on several occasions in the

story, she is wrong. The Misfit is a character who comes along towards the end of the story. Arthur Bethea describes “ The Misfit” is an anti-Christ. Jesus loved children, whereas children make the anti-Christ Misfit ‘ nervous’” (247).

He, along with his two-gang men, has escaped from prison and now on the loose. They come along after the accident, looking like they are going to be good Samaritans, when actually they turn out to be murderers on the run. Along with the role the characters play in the story, the setting is also essential in which it starts in the house, moves to the car, and ends in the woods. At the beginning of the story, all the characters are in the house in an unknown city, debating on where they will go on vacation. Of course, the grandmother does not want to go where Bailey has planned.

After they argue and figure out where they will go, they get in the car and head for Tennessee. While riding in the car, the grandmother starts remembering her childhood and demands that Bailey go to an old plantation she remembered. Putting them off track, they end up on a dirt road in Georgia where the grandmother realizes but does not say that they are in the wrong spot. After having a car accident, they family ends up in a ditch in the middle of nowhere. Little by little, each character is taken into the woods and do not return. In the woods is where the story ends, where the Misfit and his gang members ultimately kill the whole family.

The characters and the setting are both important, and they come together to create irony that is shown throughout the whole story. At the beginning of the story, the grandmother tells us “ The Misfit is a loose from the Federal

Pen and headed towards Florida" (405) this being her reasoning for not wanting to go to Florida. Little did they know, along the way, the grandmother would get them lost and lead them right into the Misfit's path. Before coming intact with the Misfit, the grandmother had nothing good to say about him and judged him without knowing the slightest thing about him.

Not until later, when coming face to face with him, she automatically changed her tone when she knew that her life was in jeopardy. Another example of irony would be dealing with the cat. At first, the cat was not supposed to come along on the trip. With the grandmother being so hardheaded, she brought the cat along anyways. The cat jumped up, which is when the accident happened. If the grandmother had just done as Bailey said and left the cat, then the accident may not have ever happened. After analyzing the characters, setting, and irony of "A Good Man is Hard to Find," we see how these elements are essential for this story.

We can see how certain behaviors of certain characters, like the Grandmother, lead to dangerous circumstances. If only the Grandmother would not have thought she was superior and had to have everything her way, the entire ruckus would not have happened. Work Cited Bethea Arthur F. "O'Connor's A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND." *Explicator* 64. 4 (2006): 246-249. AcademicSearch Premier. Web. 18 Feb. 2013 O'Connor, Flannery. "A Good Man is Hard to Find." *Literature* 8th ed. Eds Laurie Kirszner and Stephen Mandell. Boston: Wadsworth, 2013. 599-621. Print.