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## **A Comparison Of “ Young Goodman Brown” And “ A Goodman Is Hard To Find” Essay Sample**

True evil is more than an emotion or an act; it is an existence that encompasses ones complete being. Many authors try to depict evil but never capture the full essence of it. The stories of “ Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and “ A Goodman is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’ Connor clearly illustrate pure evil.

Contained in both stories is an issue where evil is present. The evil that exposes the characters in the pieces is very different but effective. During these situations the characters alter their facades to reveal their true selves. It might even be said that the theme for these works is how the worst situation leads us to a quest of self discovery. This thought brings us to the idea that, sometimes evil has to become evident in order for us to truly understand ourselves and others. Within the story of “ Young Goodman Brown”, Hawthorne uses the image of Satan, in human form to represent evil. This kind faced Satan rapidly exhibits the evil among the people in the town of Salem. The character quickly reveals the true nature of the towns people by blatantly stating it. This vast amount of information can not be fully comprehended by Goodman Brown. In his situation Brown could not accept the flaws he was presented with and could see nothing but evil in himself and others. This sudden realization of evil brought down his previously “ pure” disposition, Brown was nothing but evil himself.

Throughout “ A Goodman is Hard to Find” an important character of evil is introduced: the Misfit. The Misfit uses a tragic circumstance to reveal the

true characters of the family. The realization of the family members is not entirely a conscience thought, but an unconscious one. This family is placed in a terrible situation in which they have no will or reason to keep up their false fronts, and they are revealed. During the story the family members never displayed their feelings or thoughts about any particular subject. Specifically they never expressed feelings toward one another, good or bad. When the Misfit arrives in the situation everything changes and the characteristics of the family are altered. With this new found self awareness they are now able to express emotions to each other. Although these feelings are not immense they are still present. When they broke down the barriers of their external selves, they realized all they had left was pure love.

The setting in the tales are different, yet very similar. Within the topic of setting there is a great amount of symbolism, which helps to create a more realistic atmosphere. The illusion of a forests and deserted areas are used to add a sense of mystery and fear, which it clearly creates. In " Young Goodman Brown" the walk along the dark, woods path depicts a fearful image. Rather than the dirt road, in front of the woods in the middle of the day, in " A Good Man is Hard to Find," which gives a sense of mystery. The main similarity in setting is the instilled fear of being lost. The forests symbolizes an elaborate maze in which it is easy to become completely lost, mentally and physically. Much like Goodman Brown was when he was put in woods. Brown was completely lost mentally and will never be able to find his way back from where he began. The dirt road represents a lack of confusion, it is not complex but entirely simple. Similar to how the family could " break" down their complexity and be completely themselves. Once the family was

able to shed their external selves they were solely simple. The settings were both important to the plot, but overall set a mood for the theme.

The complex question that is posed to you: is there a good man in either of the stories? I do not believe that there is a good man in either of the stories, due to the fact that there is a vast amount of evil. The characteristics that are displayed by a "good" man are not evident in either of the pieces of literature studied. The presence of evil overtakes any aspect of good that could occur, which ruin the possibility of a good man existing in that environment.

It is said that there is good in everyone I feel that concept is possible but not probable. Meaning that the thought that everyone has a certain extent of good in them is not completely true. I think that people can display good intentions but lack the genuine emotion of good. I feel that "A Good Man is Hard to Find" reflects this thought. The character of the Misfit is running away from jail and has to do everything he can in order to save himself. He comes upon a family stranded down a dirt road, and brutally kills them all. I feel that it was necessary for him to do this. If the Misfit didn't kill the family it would have been committing suicide for himself. He relates to the family and even develops a "friendship" with the grandmother. Although nothing could stop him from achieving his goal of freedom. The Misfit might not have come across as a "good" man but he did everything that he could just to exist. These aspects display that the Misfit had noble or good intentions but that the underlying element was that it was pure evil.

If a person is truly good then it would take a catastrophic event to alter the person's complete disposition to evil. Although in " Young Goodman Brown" the character is easily influenced to release any aspect of good he had and become evil. This leads us to the thought that Brown lacked the true essence of good because he was so quickly conformed to evil. The new found evil that Brown discovers changes his life forever and he will never be the same ever again. The emotion that we feel with the character of Brown in the end of the story is that he died with a sad, unhappy life. This unhappiness is directly related to the evil that had encompassed himself. If Brown was a good man then the power of Satan wouldn't have been able to bring him to the dark side of evil.

The longing for complete self understanding is a large aspect within these stories. Every character has a moment when all barriers are broken down and they are truly revealed. It is unfortunate that the path of self discovery has to be involved with evil; but sometime a harsh instigator is needed. I believe that in both pieces the characters would have never fully understood themselves or others unless the evil was present. Therefore you can look at the evil with a sort of appreciation and understanding. Without the evil the characters would be nothing but perfectly groomed facades. At times evil might have a face but the true sense of evil is an emotion that can not be seen but solely felt.