

# Essay on theme in a good man is hard to find

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" is an interesting and entertaining story. There are several interpretations as to what is the main theme to the story, some being more widely believed than others. It is generally accepted that the story explores the concept of good and evil, and of godliness. However, as well as this theme, there are smaller ones interwoven. Perhaps, as with many texts, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" is written ambiguously so that the ultimate interpretation is left to each individual reader.

The most frequently accepted theme in this story is the common one of good and evil. "A Good Man is Hard to Find" introduces a clash concerning a grandmother with a somewhat shallow view of good, and a convict who personifies evil. The grandmother appears to, predominantly, see goodness as simply of behaving in a civilised way, demonstrating good manners, and being born into the "the right people," in terms of family. The grandmother meets The Misfit, who appears to be candidly evil, and has no apparent sense of guilt. Instead, he has an open longing to carry out unpleasant or damaging actions for no larger reason. Getting to grips with the impulses of the criminal, and what constitutes "good" is a key conundrum of the story. Also related to the theme of good and evil is that of divine goodness and enlightenment. The conflict between the grandmother and The Misfit centres around Jesus. The grandmother mentions prayer and Jesus with the intention of connecting with The Misfit's on a religious level. It becomes clear, however, that The Misfit has given more thinking time to Christ than the grandmother. The Misfit's disbelief in Jesus is what has caused him to believe there is no real right or wrong in the world and, therefore, no meaning or

reason to life on earth. The climax to the tale is when the grandmother seems to have a flash of heavenly grace, which may serve to change for the better, both her and The Misfit.

“ A Good Man is Hard to Find” is generally accepted to be a story of good, evil, and divine grace. Nevertheless, there are other ways of interpreting it. Some people view the story as that of a self-centred woman who relies on manipulation to obtain what she wants in life, but is eventually incapable of saving her own life through such methods. There are various times in the tale when the grandmother manipulates other people, some of which being her family and The Misfit. The ways in which people manipulate each other in order to achieve their personal desires is a thoughtful possibility as a theme for this story. It does not appear to be the central theme, but it is entirely likely that Flannery had the concept in mind when she wrote it.

It is generally accepted that the story is based on a central theme of good and evil and of the divine enlightenment. However, there are others themes that can be identified, such as that of the ways in which human beings manipulate each other. However, it is possible that Flannery wrote “ A Good Man is Hard to Find” with several possible interpretations in mind. Like many art forms, literature is often designed to be left up to the interpretation of each reader.