

# Grandmother's grace in a good man is hard to find

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The things that come to mind having read Flannery O'Connor's story, A Good Man is Hard to Find are grace, mercy, and the injustice of justice. The story mainly deals with the central character, the grandmother, and how she relates with others.

The grandmother is self-centered and liked getting attention, as was evident in the first paragraph of the story when the whole family was set to going to Florida she was still trying to convince them to go to Tennessee instead, where she would like to go to meet her friends. Even though she relented with going to Florida, she made sure she got into the car first so she could hide her pet cat, which she knows her son does not like to bring on journeys.

Further, she is seated between the two children, which seem like the grandmother's ploy so she could get the children's attention, or at least some of it, by pointing interesting scenery and telling them stories.

Later on in the story, it is her selfishness that got the family into trouble, telling the children about a house with secret panels where silver is hidden so they would want to see it even though she knew there was no such thing, and after realizing that she was wrong she dared not admit it to anybody and the cat she secretly brought with her caused a ruckus.

The grandmother paid attention to detail, and on the extreme, paid tribute to superficialities. She wore such intricate accessories to go with her dress, to make sure that if anything happens the people will know exactly that she was a lady.

She pointed to a black kid they passed by, commenting what a lovely painting it would make but not really empathizing with the child's plight.

Perhaps what showed the grandmother's penchant for superficiality is the difference between how she and June Star talks.

The grandmother criticized June Star for being tactless and disrespectful, but June Star all throughout the story spoke her mind out loud, even if it offended other people, whereas the grandmother engaged in small talks with everybody, in the car, with Uncle Sam and his wife, even with The Misfit.

To some extent, the grandmother's character is likable, in the sense that it aptly portrays the average person, with concerns regarding appearance, norms, and what is politically correct. However, it shows the flaws of being one. And the story deals with this, and the transformation of the grandmother at the last seconds of her life.

The grandmother, faced with The Misfit, began paying lip service that The Misfit must be a good man, saying she knows he must come from nice people. The Misfit shares his fragmented story, and we sense that he suffered injustice, and he has broken out of jail to give justice to the injustice done to him. He does not know his crime, but they had papers on him that proves he did commit a crime, and the punishment drove him crazy.

The grandmother heard The Misfit, but she was not really listening all this time, as she was more concerned with telling The Misfit to pray and trying to convince The Misfit and herself that he was a good man. The grandmother's talk of the good man shows that what she considers good people are people who pray, who call on to Jesus, who are religious so to speak. She asked The Misfit to pray, to change, indirectly to spare her life, and yet she continues to judge him, telling him that he should pray and even offer him money.

Yet, all her talk was not lost. When The Misfit confided his confusion, saying that he wished he had been there when Jesus raised the dead so he would know for sure and then he will not be like what he is, the grandmother's head cleared.

And as the grandmother realized this and touched him, telling him, " Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children", it was like the hand of grace that touched him, because then the grandmother was finally seeing The Misfit as he really is, a man in need of direction, mercy and grace, no different than her or her own family, and in that final breath she understood all that she was saying about Jesus and being good, and at that moment she accepted her death.

The Misfit said that she would have been a good woman if there was somebody there to shot her every minute of her life, showing that the grandmother stopped judging people and started accepting them at the face of death. Still, it was a good thing for her to have achieved her own saving grace by understanding what grace meant before she died.