

# A good man is hard to find: irony

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“ A Good Man is Hard to Find” In the short story, “ A Good Man is Hard to Find” there is irony all through the pages. It shows how you should follow your gut instinct when you think you shouldn’t go somewhere, when you know something bad is going to happen. In the story it also talks about how the grandmother wore her nice clothes in case of an accident, she wanted to look like a lady in case anything bad was to happen. The grandmother was constantly talking about the good in people, but was she a good woman?

The first bit of irony the story throws at the reader is on the first page when the grandmother is talking about how she doesn’t want to go to Florida because that’s where the Misfit is headed. As the grandmother is trying to get her son Bailey to listen as she says, “ The Misfit is a loose from the Federal Pen and headed toward Florida and you read here what it says he did to these people. Just you read it. I wouldn’t take my children in any direction with a criminal like that a loose in it. I couldn’t answer to my conscience if I did” (O’Connor 281).

Now I don’t believe that the ironic twist is that the misfit was headed to Florida just like the family, I believe that the twist is that the Misfit just so happen be on the same dirt road that the grandmother asked her son Bailey to turn down later on in the story. The grandmother wanted to turn down this dirt road in Georgia because she remembered an old plantation house she had visited when she was younger. After turning down the road she then remembered that this was not the road at all, the old plantation house she had remembered was in Tennessee, not Georgia.

The second major ironic twist that stood out to me was how the grandmother wore good clothes to go on a road trip, “ In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once she was a lady” (O’Connor 282). The grandmother wore a navy dress with a straw hat that had white violets on it. Indeed the grandmother was dressed like a lady, but did she act upon it at all times? I think she did just that, I believe she acted like a lady but was not truly one. Grandmother’s cat caused Bailey to have an accident. ...as the grandmother limped out of the car, her hat still pinned to her head but the broken front brim standing up at a jaunty angle and the violet spray hanging off the side” (O’Connor 287). At this point is when I believe that the grandmother acts as if she is a lady. If she was a true lady then maybe her clothes would not have been messed up, or there wouldn’t have been an accident at all. But there is still that piece of thought about how the grandmother knew to dress in case of an accident.

The final bit of irony is how the grandmother kept talking about good men, and how they are hard to find. When the family stops at the diner to eat she talks to Red Sammy and his wife about how hard good men are hard to find, but then she also tells Red Sammy that he is a good man because he let a couple of men charge gas. Red Sammy’s wife says there isn’t no one that she can trust, ““ And I don’t count nobody out of that, not nobody,’ she repeated, looking at Red Sammy” (O’Connor 285).

After they wreck a car shows up with The Misfit and his two side kicks in it, who turn out not to be good men. The grandmother realizes real soon that the man is The Misfit, she recognized him from the picture in the newspaper.

Soon after arriving Bobby Lee takes Bailey and his son John Wesley into the woods to kill them. The grandmother went on about how the Misfit could be a good man, and how he should pray. The Misfit told her that his family was good people, he just wasn't.

Soon Bobby Lee and Hiram took the children's mother, June Star, and the baby to the woods to meet up with the boys. The grandmother then realized that she must think of something soon, because she would be next. They started talking about Jesus and how he did or didn't raise the dead. The Misfit said that if he didn't know but if he would have been there he would have known better and wouldn't be the way he is now. "Why you're one of my own babies. You're one of my own children!" (O'Connor 293).

After the grandmother said that she touched him on the shoulder and the Misfit turned around and shot her three times in the chest. This was a great short story for irony, because the grandmother was correct about most things. The grandmother knew not to go towards Florida because The Misfit was headed that way after escaping from the pen. She was right about dressing like a lady in case of an accident, because indeed there was an accident, but she caused the accident by bringing her cat along without anyone knowing.

Then there is speak of a good man, is there any such thing? Red Sammy's wife wouldn't even think of him as a good man, if your wife doesn't believe you are no one really can. The Misfit comes along and talks to the grandmother for a while about good people, while doing so shoots her family then her dead. "She would have been a good woman," The Misfit said, "if it

had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life” (O’Connor 293). This goes with my assumption that the grandmother was just acting like a lady, and The Misfit even saw through her lies.