

A good man is hard to find by flannery o`connor: overview

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Courtney Barnes Page 1 Intro to Lit. Prof. Rupp Feb 18 2013 You've Got Good Blood Literary Analysis of "A Good Man is Hard to Find" By Flannery O'Connor "You've got good blood." "I know you come from nice people, (504) cried the grandmother. "Pray!" (505) she pleads using grace and religion to plead to the better nature of what she thinks is still a good man. The story "A Good Man is Hard to Find" is about a family on vacation to Florida. The family takes a detour down a dirt road to look at an old plantation house that the grandmother tells a story about.

She describes the house in such an intriguing way that most of the family is very eager to see it. However on the way the grandmother realizes that the house isn't in Georgia at all but in fact in Tennessee, where she was longing to go instead of Florida. This startles her and she begins knocking things around and the cat jumps out of the basket landing on Bailey's neck causing the car accident that leaves them stranded on the lonely road. When a passing car stops to help the grandmother quickly recognizes one of the men as "The Misfit", a dangerous man who has escaped from prison.

The grandmother confronts him and he tells her "It probably would have been better for your family if you had not recognized me at all lady." (504) While the Page 2 Grandmother and the Misfit have a conversation about being a good man and how even a man who has turned bad can in fact be good again, the two men that came with the Misfit start breaking apart the family into small groups taking them into the woods to be shot and killed. While her family is being murdered in the woods behind her the Grandmother is pleading for her dear life shouting "I know you wouldn't

shoot a lady! (507) She continued on conversing with the Misfit knowing her family was being brutally murdered, trying to persuade him back to a good man. She asks him what he did to go to prison in the first place and he tells her he don't remember, but they tell him that he killed his dad and they must be right because they have the papers to prove it. As he goes on describing what has happened to him and what they done to him the reader gets the impression that he was wrongfully convicted. The Grandmother goes on telling him to pray, pray, pray. If you would pray" " Jesus would help you" (507) She goes on telling the Misfit that God has the power to fix things and to bring people back from the dead. She stresses over and over again during the time of their conversation the importance and power of prayer. If you dig deeper into the meaning of the story you can also see that the Grandmother is also pleading and praying for her own forgiveness and life. After all it is her fault that her families fate had become this. The outcome of the story was all consequence of the direct actions of the Grandmother.

If she hadn't suggested visiting the old plantation and made up things to entice the family to want to go then they never would have been on that road. If she wouldn't have brought the cat the accident wouldn't have happened and if she wouldn't have spoken of recognizing Page 3 " The Misfit" murderer then he wouldn't have killed her and her family. She unknowingly led her family to their tragic deaths. In the story the Grandmother is but of course the prominent character. By showing imperfections in her character the author shows the biased property of grace that she possesses.

The Grandmother is portrayed as a typical southern woman of this era. She even dresses very sophisticated for a car trip. She wants to make sure she is recognized as a woman. If she was in an accident " anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once she was a lady. " The main theme of the story is religion. The plot intends to symbolize the spiritual grace passed from one human being to another with no regard to kindness or evil at all. You get a clear understanding of this in how the Grandmother misinterprets the word " good". Grace is clearly used when the Grandmother says to the misfit " why you are one of my babies.

You're one of my own children! "(508) This was used to show him and get him to understand that they are both human beings. The Grandmother believes that because the Misfit is a good man that he cannot shoot a lady, his conscience just won't allow it. This is where she misinterprets " good". The Grandmother is the portrait of blind faith that so many of us operate daily from. She believes with all her soul that somewhere in this man is good if she digs deep enough she can bring it out in him. Despite all the bad things he has done, even in killing her family she appeals to the good side of him.

Page 4 We all want to believe in the good of mankind. In the face of evil it's that very hope and belief that bring back the balance of good to evil in the world. The story focuses on Christian beliefs and values depicts sin and punishment, belief and disbelief, good and evil. The Grandmother is representative of good and godliness. She reminisces on how times were good in her younger days and you could trust people The Misfit represents

evil. At one point he symbolizes himself with Christ as they were both punished for crimes they did not commit.

Christ died for the sins of others; however the Misfit murdered innocent people. The children in the story also play an underline role that you have to pay close attention in order to catch. They are the symbol of the breakdown of respect and discipline of future generations. In a way the story foreshadows into the way the world will be if we don't teach our children respect for people and heritage. The Grandmother also plays a foreshadowing role when she warns her family of the Misfit and his crimes, " here this fellow calls himself the Misfit is a loose from the Federal Pen and headed to Florida. (497).... giving the reader the first clue that the family will eventually run into the Misfit. Page 5 The author's symbolism throughout the story represents faith/lack of, and death. When the family stray's from the course in which they set out on where they eventually are murdered symbolizes how people often stray from their faith in Jesus. Even the town " Toombsboro" is a symbol of death. The graveyard on the plantation is a concrete symbol of death. " It was a big black battered hearselike automobile," symbolizes death has arrived.

The author brings the reader to the conclusion that modern society is drastically changing for the worse. Every day we see the evil growing and prevailing in our society. And in the story the author suggests that if everyone would find Jesus our society would once again operate on Christian morals, values and beliefs. If we teach our children about spirituality and respect while holding them to the up most standards we would be fixing the

future of our nation. Works Cited " A Good Man is Hard to Find" Flannery O'Connor / Literature and its writers 6th edition 1955