

Literature: a good
man is hard to find by
flannery o'connor
essay



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A Good Man Is Hard to Find is a short story that was written by Flannery O'Connor and got published in the year 1955. The story was initially included in the "Modern Writing I" before it was later published in another anthology "The House of Fiction" in 1960.

This vast appearance in various anthologies has made the story one of the most cherished works of this author. The story has exhibited all the characteristics for which the author is best known for her religious faith. It is a fiction work of well-drawn characters that are represented through a philosophy which underscores the author's devout religious belief and faith in the Roman Catholic way.

A Good Man Is Hard to Find is actually one of the highly regarded works by this author where characterization is well exhibited through out the plot. In this story, O'Connor's own attitude towards her faith is observed in the way she paints her characters through aspects, such as dialogue, whereby each character befits well the role he or she plays in the story.

Characterization in this short story is displayed through various tools such as actions, clothing, speech and dialogue, family life, moral codes, and thoughts and opinions, among others. However, through the characters' dialogue and speech, all other aspects are well-expressed to the readers.

The writer's talent and ability to accord the characters' speech that would reflect their social class, moral values, age, and religious stand makes the story complete with its intended meaning of expressing her religious faith. For instance, the children are constantly heard to say things that sound childish and just fit them better as kids.

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Even though the story opens innocently, the author starts by introducing the character of the story's antagonist; the Misfit. Misfit is observed to be an escaped murder convict who repeats his habits by killing the entire family towards the end of the story.

Via this character, the writer manages to explore the concept of 'grace' in Christianity where it comes out clear that God's divine pardon of humans can only be guaranteed through pleading or asking. As observed in the story, it is only the grandmother who manages to attain grace at the moment when she is observing the death and recognizes the murderer; the Misfit, as her own child (Evans 36).

For the writer, the grace of God is not only a force that is lacking within the character, but something that is undeserved. However, the characters in the story often miss out the opportunity to make a connection in the real perception whereby their spiritual blindness is said to hinder them from coming into terms with the truth.

Family dysfunctions and problems reveal in the story. The manner by which every family member would interact with the others is used to bring forth a character of the heroes.

This could be observed through a number of episodes in the story such as the kids' behavior of disrespect towards the older folks, the unsuccessful attempts of Bailey to uphold his responsibility as the 'father' and also the baby's fixation by the mother.

However, despite of all these, the family is still intact together and would apparently manage to take family vacations together. This compared to the situation of the Misfit's family where their own father is killed displays a big family dysfunction.

All these aspects observe the truth in the writer's perceptions through the words of the grandmother that " a good man is hard to find." The aspects as explored through the characters have managed to come out clearly as the writer's own characterization. The author observes the way people often lie about their real religious faith. For instance, as the Misfit observes, " she would always have been a good person, if somebody out there would have to shoot her every other minute of her life" (O'Connor 17).

Through the use of violence, something that contrasts her stand as a Stuart believer and Christian, the writer manages to bring the characters in the story to reality. Through the use of violence, O'Connor is finally able to make some of the hard-headed characters, such as the grandmother, come into terms to their moment of grace, and through this, the writer manages to express her real attitude towards Christianity.

Evans, Richard. " A Good Man Is Hard To Find." *Dark Humor* 12. 34 (2010): 34- 36. Print.

O'Connor, Flannery. *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*. New York: New English Library, 1962. Print.