

QUICK CARD: “A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND”



<p><i>Reference</i></p>	<p>“A Good Man is Hard to Find.” Flannery O’Connor. (1953) ISBN: 978-0156364652</p>
<p><i>Plot</i></p>	<p>An elderly lady, only referred to as “the grandmother,” gets peeved when her son’s family decides to vacation in Florida instead of her preferred destination, east Tennessee. However, she lives with her son and refuses to be left behind, so she accompanies them on their car trip in spite of the fact that they have crossed her will. She is sure to dress stylishly for travel so that everyone will know she is a lady if they get in an accident, and secretly stows away the family cat so that it will not miss her or hurt itself in her absence. After stopping at The Tower for lunch and a conversation with the owners in which the grandmother commiserates about the passing of better days, the family continues on their trip. The grandmother remembers an old plantation she remembers seeing as a child, and manipulates the family into going out of their way to see it. Upon realizing that the plantation she remembers is not in Georgia at all but in Tennessee, the grandmother upsets the hidden cat, which jumps up and attacks her son the driver. The car veers off the road and rolls over into a ditch. While they wait for help, a black car drives up beside them and three men get out. The grandmother recognizes one of them to be the infamous Misfit, and begs him to let them be, insisting that he looks like a good man. The Misfit has each of her family members killed, and the grandmother urges him to remember Jesus. He professes feeling slighted for not seeing the resurrection, and suggests that all of his criminal actions are necessary because he has not seen it. Notice that, according to the Misfit, if Jesus did or did not do what he said, there is “nothing for you to do.” At the end of his tirade the grandmother claims that he is one of her own babies, and the Misfit shoots her three times in the chest. She dies peacefully with the Misfit claiming that she would have been a good woman if someone had been there to shoot her every day of her life. He says “It’s no real pleasure in life.”</p>
<p><i>Setting</i></p>	<p>A highway in rural Georgia. The grandmother insists that the times are such that people are not as good as they used to be. Three generations of her family are represented.</p>
<p><i>Characters</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grandmother: a prim and proper woman fixated on manners and social standing; she manipulates her family until she gets her way. • Bailey: the grandmother’s son; a subdued but unswerving man • The mother: young and innocent; mother to three children • John Wesley: the son and oldest child of Bailey; notice the allusion in his name to the founder of Methodism • June Star: daughter of Bailey; like her brother she is strong minded and

	<p>unafraid to back talk her grandmother.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Misfit: a wanted convict in the South; he has all the manners and gentility that the grandmother respects; he wrestles with the idea of the resurrection; an inverted prophetic or Christological figure • Bobby Lee and Hiram: The Misfit's sidekicks • Red Sammy Butts: the gas station owner who complains about the modern generation with the grandmother
<i>Conflict</i>	<p>Man vs. Himself Man vs. God Man vs. Man</p>
<i>Theme</i>	<p>The shared and equalizing fallen nature of all humanity. The offense and unpleasantness, but necessity, of grace and the Gospel. The helplessness of man to justify himself.</p>
<i>Literary Devices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Gothic genre • Imagery • Allusion: compare the language in the grandmother's death to that of Stephen in the Book of Acts