DESPERATION VIEWED FROM TWO SHORT STORIES: FLANNERY O’CONNOR’S A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND AND JOHN UPDIKE’S SEPARATING

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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May God Almighty bless them all, Amin.

Medan, March 2009

Anggi Cito Sartika
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Analysis

One kind of literary work is short story. Short story will be analyzed because it is amazing of how the short story writers have to put the subject matter of the story in less word. Short story is normally applied to works of fiction ranging in length from one thousand to fifteen thousand words. Edgar Allan Poe in William Kenney’s *How to Analyze Fiction* (1966:103) settled the matter of a short story’s proper length when he said it should be short enough to be read at one sitting. Poe also said the story should be long enough to produce the desired effect on the reader.

Short story necessarily embodies issues and ideas. Even stories written for entertainment alone are based in an idea or position. The idea will bring the readers into a message. Then that message will make the readers easier to understand the story. The idea or what we called theme sometimes talks about social life. In fact, the literary work reflects of society, real life or social condition.

In this case, the idea that will be analyzed is desperation. In social life, desperation is existed. Some human beings sometimes feel the characteristics of desperation in their life. We as human being sometimes feel despair of something in our life or at least we run short of hope. Etymologically speaking, desperation is the state of being desperate. Desperate is giving little hope of success: tried when all else failed; ready to do anything, regardless of danger.
Then as the objects of my analysis, two short stories which indicate desperation are chosen. They are Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” and John Updike’s “Separating”. There are some reasons why these short stories are chosen. As we can see, one of the short stories entitled “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”; it already indicates hopelessness which means it indicates desperation also. Two short stories are analyzed because it is expected to find difference characteristics of desperation which shown by the characters in those short stories. Desperation is indicated through the characters of those short stories. The characters that indicate desperation are The Misfit in “A Good Man is Hard to Find” and Richard (the father or husband) in “Separating”.

Those two characters indicate some characteristics of desperation. But this far, there are three characteristics of desperation which often shown by the two characters in those short stories. And they are hopelessness, sorrow, and violence. The definitions of the three characteristics of desperation can’t be concluded from the books that relate to desperation: Wayne W. Dyer’s There’s A Spiritual Solution To Every Problem (2005:266), A. N Ubaedy’s Kedahsyatan Bepikir Positif (2007:101) and browsing the internet. Hopelessness is having no hope, offering no hope, incurable, having no possibility of solution and impossible. Sorrow is a particular cause of deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune. And violence is an action or structural arrangement that results in physical or non-physical harm to one or more persons. Finally, this analysis will be limited to those characteristics of desperation.
Both of the characters represent those characteristics of desperation by their actions and statements on the two short stories. As an example a character named The Misfit in Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” is such a good model to indicate desperation. He does not believe in God. He is not religious and does not want to be, citing his disbelief in the powers of God as a main reason for his non-Christian outlook. He considers that he is free to do everything that he wants. He has a dark background. His father used to abuse him, so he thinks that everyone is evil. The writer of this short story is Mary Flannery O’Connor. She is an American writer. “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” was her first collection, in 1955. Her works combine flat realism with grotesque situations; violence is encountered without apparent reason or preparation. The characters that she created in her stories are quite often appearing to be odd, eccentric, bizarre, and gratuitously cruel.

Another character is Richard as the father in John Updike’s “Separating”. His wife is Joan. He decides to separate with his wife. He has four kids; Judith, Richard Jr., John and Margareth. The problem is Richard does not really sure why he should do the separation. He gets along with his wife but he does not feel happy of his marriage. He does not really know what steps should be taken to fix his marriage. The parents’ separation influences their children too. “Separating” is written by John Hoyer Updike. He was born in March 18, 1932 in Shillington, Pennsylvania. Updike has a gift for using banal phrases of domestic joy and discord to give dimension to familial situation, which he seems to absorb from the storms and brief moments of quiet in modern life.
Finally, all of those explanations which are mentioned become the reasons to have this analysis which entitled **Desperation Viewed from Two Short Stories: Flannery O’Connor’s *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* and John Updike’s *Separating***.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problems

Both of the two short stories’ characters show their characteristics of desperation. Both of the characters’ desperation influences other characters. Based on those statements, the impact and the signs of those characteristics of desperation will be analyzed through these following questions:

1. How does Misfit’s desperation make him do the violence and influence the other characters in Flannery O’Connor’s “*A Good Man Is Hard to Find*”?
2. How does the parents’ separation become sufferings to the children and especially to Richard in Updike’s “*Separating*”?
3. Do both of the characters, The Misfit in Flannery O’Connor’s “*A Good Man is Hard to Find*” and Richard in Updike’s “*Separating*”, show the same characteristics of desperation in those short stories?

### 1.3 Objective of the analysis

In line with the problems that I mentioned before, this thesis is meant to answer those questions. In other words, what I expect from my analysis are:

1. To find out the violence that Misfit does and the impacts for the other characters in Flannery O’Connor’s “*A Good Man Is Hard to Find*”.

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2. To describe the children’s and especially Richard’s sufferings because of the parents’ separation in Updike’s “Separating”.

3. To find out what kind of characteristics of desperation that each character shows in both of the short stories.

1.4 Scope of the analysis

In this analysis, two short stories are chosen each by two different authors, they are Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find” and John Updike’s “Separating”. Both of the short stories indicate desperation. The characteristics of desperation are hopelessness, sorrow, and violence. Actually, the other characteristics of desperation are founded in those short stories, but three of them are only used for this analysis. Those characteristics of desperation portrayal in two characters, they are; The Misfit in Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find” and Richard in Updike’s “Separating”. And those two characters’ desperation influences toward the other characters are also being analyzed.

1.5 Significance of the analysis

This thesis is entitled Desperation Viewed From Two Short Stories: Mary F. O’Connor’s A Good Man is Hard to Find and John Updike’s Separating. In accomplishing this analysis, the writer hopes this analysis will enrich the knowledge about literature especially short story. This analysis is expected to make the readers more interested in understanding short story.
Hopefully, the readers can get better understanding about desperation. In accomplishing this analysis the writer wishes it can help readers in getting better knowledge about how to deal with desperation in their life. And it inspires the readers in discussing a further analysis about desperation.

1.6 Review of Related Literature

In making a good literary analysis, some sources are needed to support it. The writer does not find much sources or books which discuss about desperation. Some books are founded that related to desperation which are entitled *There’s a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem* by Wayne W. Dyer and *Kedahsyatan Berpikir Positif* by A.N Ubaedy. From these books I can conclude desperation characteristics as the scope of my analysis. In *There’s a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem* (2001:266), Wayne W. Dyer states that people who desperate usually think negatively. They have self-pity or they even hate themselves. They think that life is not fair. They sometimes feel that other people responsible for their deep sadness. While A.N Ubaedy states a person who desperate will feel unworthy and powerless to the others, in his book entitled *Kedahsyatan berpikir Positif* (2007:101).

By reading *How to Analyze Fiction* by William Kenney and *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing, Fourth Edition* by Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs, informations are founded about short story. One of the short story elements which the writer gets from those books is character. Considering those informations, it makes easier for the writer to analyze the desperation characteristics through the character.
1.7 Theoretical Approach

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* (1956:90) stated that there are two approaches in analyzing the literary works. They are intrinsic and extrinsic approach. Intrinsic approach is a kind of approach which analyze literary works based on the text and the structural points of literary works; characters, plot, theme, setting, style, and point of view. Extrinsic approach is a kind of approach which analyzes the relationship between the content and the other disciplines of knowledge such as history, religion, psychology, biography, etc.

But in this analysis, intrinsic approach is used. The applying of intrinsic approach is suitable to analyze the short stories from the aspects that build them from the inside of the texts. In this analysis, two aspects of the short story are used; they are the theme and the character. The writer uses desperation which is the idea or the theme of the two short stories as the object of my analysis. The desperation that is used to analyze divide into three characteristics, and they are; hopelessness, sorrow, and violence. Beside the theme, character is also being analyzed as one kind of the text aspect. The characteristics of desperation are analyzed portrayal in two characters of those short stories which are The Misfit in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” and Richard in “Separating”.

The library research is also applied to support this analysis. All significant data are collected to support and enrich the topic of this analysis from the relevant books, particularly literary books and browse the internet.
CHAPTER II

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

2.1 Short Story

The short story is one of literary genre. Richard Taylor in his book, Understanding the Elements of Literature (1981:41) states:

“There are a great many subdivisions of narrative fiction, but they group themselves roughly into antique or outmoded forms: the folk tale, epic, romance, allegory, and satire on the one hand; and contemporary forms: the short story and novel on the other.”

Short story is usually fictional, prose narrative and tends to be more concise and to the point than longer works of fiction, such as novel. Short story writing is a challenging art because the short story writers have to put the subject matter in less word. William Kenney in his book, How to Analyze Fiction (1966:103), states that A short story is short. More specifically, the term “short story” is normally applied to works of fiction ranging in length from one thousand to fifteen thousand words.

There are actually some theories about the short story. Edgar V. Roberts in Literature: Introduction to Reading and Writing (1995:1707) defines that short story:

“A compact, concentrated work of narrative fiction that may also contain description, dialogue, and commentary. Poe used the term ‘brief prose tale’ for the short story, and emphasized that it should create a major, unified impact.”

While Richard Taylor in Understanding the Elements of Literature (1981:48) states:

“The short story, on the other hand, is a particularly modern conception and did not gain recognition as an important literary form
until the last half of the nineteenth century. It is similar to the novel in all characteristics except that it limits itself to a single, complete episode and makes up in compression and intensity for what it lacks in scope and breadth of vision. The short story is an outgrowth of the modern concern for the examination of artistic materials and forms. In it we see the basic unit or building block of the novel isolated for examination.”

From those statements Richard Taylor does not only talk about the definition of short story, but he also talks about the similarity of short story and novel.

Short stories date back to oral story-telling traditions which originally produced epics such as Homer’s “Iliad and Odyssey”. In Europe, the oral story-telling tradition began to develop into written stories in the early 14th century, most notably with Geoffrey Chaucer's “Canterbury Tales” and Giovanni Boccaccio's “Decameron”. Both of these books are composed of individual short stories (which range from farce or humorous anecdotes to well-crafted literary fictions) set within a larger narrative story (a frame story), although the frame tale device was not adopted by all writers.

The other ancient form of short story, the anecdote, was popular under the Roman Empire. Anecdotes functioned as a sort of parable, a brief realistic narrative that embodies a point. Short sections of verse might focus on individual narratives that could be told at one sitting. The overall arc of the tale would emerge only through the telling of multiple such sections.

The short story as a form of short fiction developed and became popular in the nineteenth century. Early examples of short stories are the Nikolai Gogol’s “Evenings On a Farm Near Dikanka” (1831-1832), Charles Brockden Brown’s
“Somnambulism” (1805), Washington Irving’s “Rip van Winkle” (1819), Edgar Allan Poe’s “Tales of the Grotesque Arabesque” (1840) and many more short stories.

Edgar Allan Poe in William Kenney’s *How to Analyze Fiction* (1966:103) settled the matter of a short story’s proper length when he said it should be short enough to be read at one sitting. Poe also said the story should be long enough to produce the desired effect on the reader. From Poe’s rules we can derive another: the effect sought in a short story should be one that can be achieved in a work short enough to be read in one sitting.

Robert Di Yanni in his book entitled *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry and The Essay* (1990:23) states that the modern short story differs from the ancient forms of short fiction in still another ways in the ratio between summary and scene. Parables, fables and tales tend to summarize action, to tell what happens in a general overview of the action. Short stories on the other hand, typically reveal character in dramatic scenes, in moments of action and in exchanges of dialogue detailed enough to represent the surface of life. In addition, the short story has traditionally been more concerned with the revelation of character through flashes of insight and shocks of recognition than the early fictional forms. Robert Di Yanni also makes the typical features of the modern realistic short story include the following:

a. Its plot is based on probability, illustrating a sequence of causally related incidents.

b. Its characters are recognizably human, and they are motivated by identifiable social and psychological forces.
2.2. A Brief Discussion about Desperation

2.2.1. Definition of desperation

As already explained in the background of this analysis, in social life, desperation is existed. Some human beings sometimes feel the characteristics of desperation in their life. We as human being sometimes feel despair of something in our life or at least we run short of hope. Etymologically speaking, desperation is the state of being desperate. Desperate is giving little hope of success: tried when all else failed; ready to do anything, regardless of danger.

It’s quite hard to find information about desperation. But some data or information are founded from few books and browsed the internet. Some of the data show some similarities.

Wayne W. Dyer in *There’s Spiritual Solution To Every Problem* (2001:264) states:

“Keputusasaan adalah sikap, dialami dalam pikiran. Hal itu adalah cara melihat situasi dalam hidup dan merasa tak berdaya. Keputusasaan sendiri merupakan proses mental yang menilai dan melihat sesuatu sebagai situasi yang buruk.”

“Desperation is attitude, experienced of in mind. That matter is the way of seeing situation in life and feel at the end of one's rope. Desperation itself represents the process of mental assessing and seeing something as ugly situation as it is.”
It means that Wayne W. Dyer believes desperation can happened in social life. He also thinks that desperation is a negative thing that influence human’s life.

While A.N Ubaedy states a person who desperate will feel unworthy and powerless to the others, in his book entitled *Kedahsyatan berpikir Positif* (2007:101).

The writer also found some information from the internet (www.thefreedictionary.com/desperate). Some definitions and the characteristics of desperation are founded, as following:

**Desperation:**

*noun* 1. MISERY, worry, trouble, pain, anxiety, torture, despair, agony, sorrow, distraction, anguish, unhappiness, heartache, hopelessness, despondency

*noun* 2. RECKLESSNESS, madness, defiance, frenzy, impetuosity, rashness, foolhardiness, heedlessness

Des·per·a·tion (dě'spər-ə'shən)

*n.*

1. The condition of being desperate.

2. Recklessness arising from despair.

**Desperation:**

*Noun*

1. desperate recklessness

2. the state of being desperate

Des·per·ate (dě'spər-ət)

*adj.*

1. Having lost all hope; despairing.


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2. Marked by, arising from, or showing despair: the desperate look of hunger; a desperate cry for help.

3. Reckless or violent because of despair: a desperate criminal.

4. Undertaken out of extreme urgency or as a last resort: a desperate attempt to save the family business.

5. Nearly hopeless; critical: a desperate illness; a desperate situation.

6. Suffering or driven by great need or distress: desperate for recognition.

7. Extremely intense: felt a desperate urge to tell the truth.

2.2.2. The characteristics of desperation

2.2.2.1 Hopelessness

Hopelessness is having no hope, offering no hope, incurable, having no possibility of solution and impossible.

Wayne W. Dyer in *There's Spiritual Solution To Every Problem* (2001:264) states:

“Ketika anda mengenali keputusasaan hanya sebagai sikap mental, anda akan memulai proses membawa harapan kepada visi batin keputusasaan dan melenyapkannya. Mustahil bagi harapan dan keputusasaan untuk ada secara bersamaan, keduanya saling meniadakan. Sering terjadi, keputusasaan yang meniadakan harapan.”

“When you recognize the desperation only as mental attitude, you will start the process to bring the hope of visual mind of desperation and wipe it out. It is impossible for hope and desperation to occur at the same time, they both are negating. It is often happened that desperation negating hope.”

Those statements mean that when people feel the desperation, they will lack of hope. They will feel unhappy of their life. They don’t feel the desire of life.
Some information about hopelessness which the writer found from the internet (www.thefreedictionary.com) are also helpful. And they are:

Hope·less (hĭp′lĕs):
adj.
1. Having no hope; despairing. See Synonyms at despondent.
2. Offering no hope; bleak.
3. Incurable.
4. Having no possibility of solution; impossible.

As we can see those information which the writer gets from a book or the internet, have some similarities. Based on the two sources, hopelessness is having no hope. People who hopeless will feel impossible to solve their problems.

2.2.2.2. Sorrow

Sorrow is a particular cause of deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune.

Wayne W. Dyer in There’s Spiritual Solution to Every Problem (2001:266) also talks about sorrow. He states:
“Proses pengkondisian yang panjang bahwa hidup tidak adil, bahwa orang lain bertanggung jawab atas kesedihanku, bahwa tidak ada yang benar – benar mengerti. Pada akhirnya pasti membentuk kebiasaan berpikir negative, yaitu keputusasaan.”

“The long condition process that life is not fair, that others are responsible of my sorrow, that no one understands. In the end surely form the habitual of negative thinking, which is desperation.”

It means that sorrow is one of the characteristic of desperation. Someone feels sorrow when they feel a deep sadness. Wayne W. Dyer also states:

“Ketika hidup dalam keputusasaan, ia tak pernah harus mengambil resiko menerima tanggung jawab atas kemuraman mereka, atau harus mengubah pola hidup mereka sejak dulu. Kelekatan itu adalah tempat perlindungan yang aman, karena di sana mereka bisa menderita dalam kenyamanan.”

“When living in desperation, he/she will never have to risk accepting the responsibility for their dourness, or have to alter their life pattern since long time. That thought becomes shelter, because over there they can suffer in pleasure.”

It means that when someone feels desperate, they consider their sorrow as the best feeling for their life, because they think that no one can understand their feeling. Everything that happened is because of everybody else.

The writer also found some information about sorrow in the internet (www.thefreedictionary.com). And they are:

Sor·row (sôr′, sór′):

n.

1. Mental suffering or pain caused by injury, loss, or despair. See Synonyms at regret.

2. A source or cause of sorrow; a misfortune.

3. Expression of sorrow; grieving.

Sorrow:

Noun
1. deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune
2. a particular cause of this

Verb

Literary **to feel deep sadness** (about death or another's misfortunes); **mourn.**

**sorrow** - an emotion of great sadness associated with loss or bereavement; "he tried to express his sorrow at her loss".

As it mentioned, sorrow is caused by despair. So, it’s clear that sorrow is one of the characteristic of desperation.

2.2.2.3. Violence

The writer only find some information about violence from the internet (www.crime.smartlibrary.org/NewInterface). Violence is an action or structural arrangement that results in physical or non-physical harm to one or more persons.

The Peace Studies Institute scholars identify a set of characteristics of violence for their index:

- it is harm of humans
- the action that causes the harm is purposely done, perpetuated, or condoned (that is, accidents that cause harm are not counted as "violence").

In short, action that a person or organization, or institution carries out intentionally that causes harm to humans is considered violence.

The scholars note, however, that:
• the harm may or may not be intended (the action was intended, not necessarily the harm)
• the action may or may not be justified
• the violence does not need to be recognized as violence by either the perpetrator or the receiver of the violence.

Neil Wollman and his colleagues divide violence into two types: **personal** and **societal**. And they are:

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<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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<td><strong>Interpersonal Violence</strong></td>
<td>Actions performed by persons outside their role as an agent or representative of a social institution that cause harm to another person or persons.</td>
<td>• homicide</td>
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<td><strong>Personel Violence:</strong></td>
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<td>• rape</td>
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<td><strong>Intrapersonal Violence</strong></td>
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Societal Violence:  
Institutional Violence  

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<th>Societal Violence:</th>
<th>Violence that occurs by the action of societal institutions and their agents. It is violence by individuals whose roles are governed by their institutional roles.</th>
<th>The scholars identify several measures within a range of institutions.</th>
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CHAPTER III

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

In analyzing the short stories from Flannery O'Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” and Updike’s “Separating”, intrinsic approach is used. Two aspects of the short story are used; they are the theme and the character. The desperation that is used to analyze divide into three characteristics, and they are; hopelessness, sorrow, and violence. Beside the theme, character is also being analyzed as one kind of the text aspect. The characteristics of desperation are analyzed portrayal in two characters of those short stories which are The Misfit in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” and Richard in “Separating”. Descriptive analytical method is also used to describe the analysis clearly. Some facts which are the short stories their selves should be described and being analyzed. As Prof. Dr. Nyoman Kutha Ratna, S.U states in his book, *Teori, Metode, dan teknik Penelitian Sastra dari Strukturalisme Hingga Prostrukturalisme Perspektif Wacana Naratif* (2004:46) about descriptive analytical method:

“Metode deskriptif analitik dilakukan dengan cara mendeskripsikan fakta – fakta yang kemudian disusul dengan analisis. Secara etimologis deskripsi dan analisis berarti menguraikan. Meskipun
3.1. Source of the Data

The short stories are chosen which wrote by Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard To Find” and Updike’s “Separating” as the main source of the data. There are also several books used as source of data.

3.2. Data Collecting Procedure

The required information in supporting the analysis is collected through the reading and searching related references to the analysis. The focus of analysis is about desperation viewed from two short stories; Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard To Find” and Updike’s “Separating”. The books are collected from several sources such as library, book store and internet. The books which are collected contain vast information about analysis.

3.3. Data Identifying Procedure

The procedure is done by reading the selected books or information. Then the writer reads whole of both short stories. Then the writer selects data or takes some notes and quotations on dialogues or statements from the short stories which related
to desperation. The selected marking text becomes the main data of analysis. All of the data refers to the characteristics of desperation which are hopelessness, sorrow and violence.

3.4. Data Analyzing Procedure

In this step; both of the short stories are being analyzed based on the characteristics of desperation, which are; hopelessness, sorrow and violence. The analysis will indicate the characteristics of desperation by analyzing the characters. All the selected data are being analyzed to achieve what has been planned for the objectives of this analysis and finally a conclusion can be drawn from the analysis. Here are the sums of this analysis.

Ex:

4.1.1 Hopelessness

Hopelessness is having no hope, offering no hope, incurable, having no possibility of solution and impossible.

It is very obvious to know that Misfit indicates hopelessness in this short story.

"Yes'm, The Misfit said as if he agreed. "Jesus shown everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn't committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me. Of course," he said, "they never shown me my papers. That's why I sign myself now. I said long ago, you get you a signature and sign everything you do and keep a copy of it. Then you'll know what you done and you can hold up the crime to the punishment and see do they match and in the end you'll have something to prove you ain't been treated right. I call myself The
Misfit," he said, "because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment." (Roberts/1987:519)

As we can see, he recalls himself “The Misfit”. It is not his real name. Misfit thinks that God is not fair. He thinks that God is not treating him right. His father is not treat him right. His father is cruel to him. His father treats Misfit different with the other children. His father told him that Misfit is not his biological son. The punishment that he gets is not ‘fit’ with every bad thing that happened in his past life. He thinks that the good things and the bad things in his life will not balance. It means that indicate hopelessness.

Misfit also blames God for all the bad things that happened in his life. He thinks that God is responsible for what he is now.

"I wasn't there so I can't say He didn't," The Misfit said. "I wisht I had of been there," he said, hitting the ground with his fist. "It ain't right I wasn't there because if I had of been there I would of known. Listen lady," he said in a high voice, "if I had of been there I would of known and I wouldn't be like I am now." His voice seemed about to crack and the grandmother's head cleared for an instant….. (Roberts/1987:520)

The Misfit also does not believe in God. He is not a religious person.

"If you would pray," the old lady said, "Jesus would help you."
"That's right," The Misfit said.
"Well then, why don't you pray?" she asked trembling with delight suddenly.
"I don't want no hep," he said. "I'm doing all right by myself." (Roberts/1987:518)

Since the beginning of his meeting with the Bailey’s and also Grandmother, Misfit already indicates hopelessness. He does not believe of anyone’s help, including God. He doesn’t need of anyone help. It is impossible for him to ask some helps from anyone. Once again, he wipes the hope out.
4.1.2 Sorrow

Sorrow is a particular cause of deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune.

Misfit has a bad background. His father tells him that he is not a biological son. His father treats him difference with the other children. His father used to abuse him. He kills his father. But he also denies that he kills his father. He tries to forget it. And sometimes he denies all the bad things that happened in his life in the past.

Here are some quotations when he lies to the Grandmother about his father and mother.

"Listen," the grandmother almost screamed, "I know you're a good man. You don't look a bit like you have common blood. I know you must come from nice people!"
"Yes mam," he said, "finest people in the world." When he smiled he showed a row of strong white teeth. "God never made a finer woman than my mother and my daddy's heart was pure gold," he said. (Roberts/1987:516)

Misfit told to Grandmother about his parents. Firstly, he said that his parent, especially his father is a good man. After talked to Grandmother further, Misfit said:

"Nome, I ain't a good man," The Misfit said after a second ah if he had considered her statement carefully, "but I ain't the worst in the world neither. My daddy said I was a different breed of dog from my brothers and sisters. 'You know,' Daddy said, 'it's some that can live their whole life out without asking about it and it's others has to know why it is, and this boy is one of the latters. He's going to be into everything!'" He put on his black hat and looked up suddenly and then away deep into the woods as if he were embarrassed again. "I'm sorry I don't have on a shirt before you ladies," he said, hunching his shoulders slightly. "We buried our clothes that we had on when we escaped and we're just making do until we can get better. We
borrowed these from some folks we met," he explained. (Roberts/1987:517)

Finally, he admits to Grandmother that his father is not a good man. Misfit has to lie because he wants to cover his sadness. From those quotations, Misfit is underestimated by his father. Misfit thinks that his father is responsible for his sadness.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DESPERATION IN FLANNERY O’CONNOR’S “A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND” AND JOHN UPDIKE’S “SEPARATING”

Desperate is giving little hope of success: tried when all else failed; ready to do anything, regardless of danger. Then as the objects of my analysis, two short stories which indicate desperation are chosen. There are some reasons why these short stories are chosen. As we can see, one of the short stories entitled “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”; it already indicates hopelessness which means it indicates desperation also. Desperation is indicated through the characters of those short stories. The characters that indicate desperation are The Misfit in “A Good Man is Hard to Find” and Richard (the father or husband) in “Separating”. Those two characters indicate some characteristics of desperation. But this far, there are three
characteristics of desperation which often shown by the two characters in those short stories. And they are hopelessness, sorrow, and violence.

4.1 The Misfit’s Desperation in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

A character named The Misfit in Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” is such a good model to indicate desperation. Here is the analysis of his characteristics of desperation in the short story. And also his violence influences toward the other characters in the short story which become the objective of this analysis.

4.1.1 Hopelessness

Hopelessness is having no hope, offering no hope, incurable, having no possibility of solution and impossible.

It is very obvious to know that Misfit indicates hopelessness in this short story.

"Yes'm, The Misfit said as if he agreed. "Jesus shown everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn't committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me. Of course," he said, "they never shown me my papers. That's why I sign myself now. I said long ago, you get you a signature and sign everything you do and keep a copy of it. Then you'll know what you done and you can hold up the crime to the punishment and see do they match and in the end you'll have something to prove you ain't been treated right. I call myself The Misfit," he said, "because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment." (Roberts/1987:519)

As we can see, he recalls himself “The Misfit”. It is not his real name. Misfit thinks that God is not fair. He thinks that God is not treating him right. His father is not treat him right. His father is cruel to him. His father treats Misfit different with the
other children. His father told him that Misfit is not his biological son. The punishment that he gets is not ‘fit’ with every bad thing that happened in his past life. He thinks that the good things and the bad things in his life will not balance. It means that indicate hopelessness. Misfit wipes the hope out. As Wayne W. Dyer in There’s Spiritual Solution To Every Problem (2001:264) states:

"Ketika anda mengenali keputusasaan hanya sebagai sikap mental, anda akan memulai proses membawa harapan kepada visi batin keputusasaan dan melenyapkannya. Mustahil bagi harapan dan keputusasaan untuk ada secara bersamaan, keduanya saling meniadakan. Sering terjadi, keputusasaan yang meniadakan harapan.”

“When you recognize the desperation only as mental attitude, you will start the process to bring the hope of visual mind of desperation and wipe it out. It is impossible for hope and desperation to occur at the same time, they both are negating. It is often happened that desperation negating hope.”

Those statements mean that when people feel the desperation, they will lack of hope. They will feel unhappy of their life. They don’t feel the desire of life.

Misfit also blames God for all the bad things that happened in his life. He thinks that God is responsible for what he is now.

"I wasn't there so I can't say He didn't," The Misfit said. "I wisht I had of been there," he said, hitting the ground with his fist. "It ain't right I wasn't there because if I had of been there I would of known. Listen lady," he said in a high voice, "if I had of been there I would of known and I wouldn't be like I am now." His voice seemed about to crack and the grandmother's head cleared for an instant….. (Roberts/1987:520)

The Misfit also does not believe in God. He is not a religious person.

"If you would pray," the old lady said, "Jesus would help you." "That's right," The Misfit said. "Well then, why don't you pray?" she asked trembling with delight suddenly. "I don't want no hep," he said. "I'm doing all right by myself." (Roberts/1987:518)
Since the beginning of his meeting with the Bailey’s and also Grandmother, Misfit already indicates hopelessness. He does not believe of anyone’s help, including God. He doesn’t need of anyone help. It is impossible for him to ask some helps from anyone. Once again, he wipes the hope out. As mentioned in the internet (www.thefreedictionary.com):

Hopeless:

*Adjective*

1. having or offering no hope
2. impossible to solve
3. Informal without skill or ability

Misfit thinks that it is impossible for anybody to help him to solve problems. He does not open the chance for any hope.

"Maybe they put you in by mistake," the old lady said vaguely. "Nome," he said. "It wasn't no mistake. They had the papers on me."
"You must have stolen something," she said. The Misfit sneered slightly. "Nobody had nothing I wanted," he said..... (Roberts/1987:518)

He also thinks that no one will fulfill his needs or no one will satisfy his desire or his happiness. He lost his trust of anyone. He does not believe that someone can help him.

Misfit is not only hopeless about the power of God. He also feels hopeless about the pleasure in life. He does not believe the existence of happiness. We can see it from the following quotations:

"Jesus was the only One that ever raised the dead," The Misfit continued, "and He shouldn't have done it. He shown everything off balance. If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but
thow away everything and follow Him, and if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness," he said and his voice had become almost a snarl. (Roberts/1987:519)

Misfit thinks that people should spend their rest time in the world by doing some violences. It would be enjoyable, but then he realizes that it is not. There’s no such pleasure in doing the violence, although he does not mind to do that. He does it because he does not think that his life is fair or balance.

"She was a talker, wasn't she?"
Bobby Lee said, sliding down the ditch with a yodel.
"She would of been a good woman," The Misfit said, "if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life."
"Some fun!" Bobby Lee said.
"Shut up, Bobby Lee," The Misfit said. "It's no real pleasure in life."
(Roberts/1987:520)
Because of all that happened in his past life, Misfit is not really pessimist in thinking about happiness. As quoted, when his friend told that it is really fun the way and the reasons why Misfit kills a character, Grand mother. But Misfit denies and rejects that it is fun. Basically, Misfit does not believe in the existence of Happiness. He quite feels hopeless about it.

4.1.2 Sorrow

Sorrow is a particular cause of deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune.

Misfit has a bad background. His father tells him that he is not a biological son. His father treats him difference with the other children. His father used to abuse
him. He kills his father. But he also denies that he kills his father. He tries to forget it. And sometimes he denies all the bad things that happened in his life in the past.

Here are some quotations when he lies to the Grandmother about his father and mother.

"Listen," the grandmother almost screamed, "I know you're a good man. You don't look a bit like you have common blood. I know you must come from nice people!"
"Yes mam," he said, "finest people in the world." When he smiled he showed a row of strong white teeth. "God never made a finer woman than my mother and my daddys heart was pure gold," he said. (Roberts/1987:516)

Misfit told to Grandmother about his parents. Firstly, he said that his parent, especially his father is a good man. After talked to Grandmother further, Misfit said:

"Nome, I ain't a good man," The Misfit said after a second ah if he had considered her statement carefully, "but I ain't the worst in the world neither. My daddy said I was a different breed of dog from my brothers and sisters. 'You know,' Daddy said, 'it's some that can live their whole life out without asking about it and it's others has to know why it is, and this boy is one of the latters. He's going to be into everything!'" He put on his black hat and looked up suddenly and then away deep into the woods as if he were embarrassed again. "I'm sorry I don't have on a shirt before you ladies," he said, hunching his shoulders slightly. "We buried our clothes that we had on when we escaped and we're just making do until we can get better. We borrowed these from some folks we met," he explained. (Roberts/1987:517)

Finally, he admits to Grandmother that his father is not a good man. Misfit has to lie because he wants to cover his sadness. From those quotations, Misfit is underestimated by his father. Misfit thinks that his father is responsible for his sadness. It means that it indicates sorrow, as Wayne W. Dyer states in There’s Spiritual Solution to Every Problem (2001:266) about the characteristics of sorrow:
“Proses pengkondisian yang panjang bahwa hidup tidak adil, bahwa orang lain bertanggung jawab atas kesedihanku, bahwa tidak ada yang benar – benar mengerti. Pada akhirnya pasti membentuk kebiasaan berpikir negative, yaitu keputusasaan.”

“The long condition process that life is not fair, that others are responsible of my sorrow, that no one understands. In the end surely form the habitual of negative thinking, which is desperation.”

Then Misfit also forgets for what he is done to his father. He kills his father. But somehow he does not remember it.

"That's when you should have started to pray," she said. "What did you do to get sent to the penitentiary that first time?"

"Turn to the right, it was a wall," The Misfit said, looking up again at the cloudless sky. "Turn to the left, it was a wall. Look up it was a ceiling, look down it was a floor. I forget what I done, lady. I set there and set there, trying to remember what it was I done and I ain't recalled it to this day. Oncet in a while, I would think it was coming to me, but it never come." (Roberts/1987:518)

Misfit describes his feeling when he was in the jail. How bad the situation in the jail. He said the only thing that he sees is just walls. Misfit has a really bad background. Something horrible happens in his past life. It is really hurt him to remember. That's why he forgets what happened. He tries hard to remember what he has done to his father. Maybe it just too just too hurt for him to remember that tragic moment. It is too hurt for him to admit that he is a murder. Although the one who be killed is his father.

Another example which indicates sorrow is Misfit feels that he has a bad luck in his life.

"Yes'm, The Misfit said as if he agreed. "Jesus shown everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn't committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me. Of course," he said, "they never shown me my papers. That's why I sign myself now. I said long ago, you get you a signature and sign everything you do and keep a copy of

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it. Then you'll know what you done and you can hold up the crime to the punishment and see do they match and in the end you'll have something to prove you ain't been treated right. I call myself The Misfit," he said, "because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment." (Roberts/1987:519)

Besides indicate hopelessness, those quotations also indicate sorrow. He calls himself as The Misfit. It is not his real name. That name symbolizes of his horrible life. Misfit feels that his life is not fair for him. He always gets a bad luck. Everything looks like goes wrong. He feels a deep sadness of it.

"Pray, pray," the grandmother began, "pray, pray . . ." I never was a bad boy that I remember of," The Misfit said in an almost dreamy voice, "but somewheres along the line I done something wrong and got sent to the penitentiary. I was buried alive," and he looked up and held her attention to him by a steady stare. (Roberts/1987:518)

Misfit does not really like being sent to the jail. He refuses to accept the situation of being in jail. He feels a deep sadness. He feels like being murdered in the jail. He expresses his misfortune.

4.1.3 Violence

The writer only find some information about violence from the internet (www.crime.smartlibrary.org/NewInterface). Violence is an action or structural arrangement that results in physical or non-physical harm to one or more persons.

Misfit is a prisoner. But he escaped from jail. He escapes from the jail with two other prisoners; they are Bobby Lee and Hiram.

"Nome, I ain't a good man," The Misfit said after a second ah if he had considered her statement carefully, "but I ain't the worst in the world neither. My daddy said I was a different breed of dog from my brothers and sisters. 'You know,' Daddy said, 'it's some that can live their whole life out without asking about it and it's others has to know why it is, and this boy is one of the latters. He's going to be into
everything!" He put on his black hat and looked up suddenly and then away deep into the woods as if he were embarrassed again. "I'm sorry I don't have on a shirt before you ladies," he said, hunching his shoulders slightly. "We buried our clothes that we had on when we escaped and we're just making do until we can get better. We borrowed these from some folks we met," he explained. (Roberts/1987:517)

Then Misfit also told the Grand mother about how his father dies.

"Maybe they put you in by mistake," the old lady said vaguely. "Nome," he said. "It wasn't no mistake. They had the papers on me." "You must have stolen something," she said.

The Misfit sneered slightly. "Nobody had nothing I wanted," he said. "It was a head-doctor at the penitentiary said what I had done was kill my daddy but I known that for a lie. My daddy died in nineteen ought nineteen of the epidemic flu and I never had a thing to do with it. He was buried in the Mount Hopewell Baptist churchyard and you can go there and see for yourself." (Roberts/1987:518)

When he talks to the Grandmother about his father, he sounds like really easy to tell her about it. He does not consider it as a big problem. He even chooses to forget the tragic moment. Misfit has a purpose in doing that crime. He can not take it anymore. Misfit does not know what to do to make his father stop underestimate him. Then he chooses to kill his father to end his sorrow. So, it means it indicates violence. As The Peace Studies Institute scholars identify a set of characteristics of violence for their index in (www.crime.smartlibrary.org/NewInterface):

- it is harm of humans
- the action that causes the harm is purposely done, perpetuated, or condoned (that is, accidents that cause harm are not counted as "violence").
He murders his father. He thinks that it is a way to end his suffers. His father does not get along with him because Misfit is not his biological son. Misfit does not know another way to stop his suffers, except he kills his father.

Misfit does not only kill his father. He also does other violences. He is not only telling Grandmother about what already happened to his father. He also tells Grandmother about his other crimes.

"Thow me that shirt, Bobby Lee," The Misfit said. The shirt came flying at him and landed on his shoulder and he put it on. The grandmother couldn't name what the shirt reminded her of. "No, lady," The Misfit said while he was buttoning it up, "I found out the crime don't matter. You can do one thing or you can do another, kill a man or take a tire off his car, because sooner or later you're going to forget what it was you done and just be punished for it." (Roberts/1987:518)

It is quite obvious what Misfit says on those quotations. He finds that it's alright in doing crimes. He is hopeless enough of life. He thinks that he will forget every crime that he does. He does not care although he will get punishments. He sounds like forget how being afraid of getting punished. He does the violences to cover his hurt broken.

"Jesus was the only One that ever raised the dead," The Misfit continued, "and He shouldn't have done it. He shown everything off balance. If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but thow away everything and follow Him, and if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness," he said and his voice had become almost a snarl. (Roberts/1987:519)

Misfit does it again. He tells about doing the violence again to the Grandmother. He has his opinion about how to spend times for people's life. He tells
to Grandmother that it is better to spend your time by doing crimes. Because he thinks that God does not give much choice in people life.

4.2 The Influences of Misfit’s Violence toward Other Characters

Misfit is one of the characters in Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”. Flannery O’Connor also creates other characters in this short story. The Misfit’s violences influence toward other character in this short story, especially for Grandmother.

Since the beginning of Misfit and Bailey’s family (Bailey, his wife and his two children), and also Grandmother’s meeting, Misfit already shows his violence toward them.

The grandmother shrieked. She scrambled to her feet and stood staring. "You're The Misfit!" she said. "I recognized you at once!"
"Yes'm," the man said, smiling slightly as if he were pleased in spite of himself to be known, "but it would have been better for all of you, lady, if you hadn't of reckernized me." (Roberts/1987:516)

Those quotations show that Misfit threatens them through his words. And it works. It makes Bailey’s and Grandmother scares of him.

Bailey turned his head sharply and said something to his mother that shocked even the children. The old lady began to cry and The Misfit reddened.
"Lady," he said, "don't you get upset. Sometimes a man says things he don't mean. I don't reckon he meant to talk to you thataway."
"You wouldn't shoot a lady, would you?" the grandmother said and removed a clean handkerchief from her cuff and began to slap at her eyes with it. (Roberts/1987:516)

Moreover, that threat makes Grandmother cries. And then Grandmother tries to persuade Misfit, so he will not kill her. It means that it indicates hopeless.
Grandmother is too scared, so she thinks that is the only way to be safe, considering that she is only an old lady. There’s nothing much that she can do.

"Yes, it's a beautiful day," said the grandmother. "Listen," she said, "you shouldn't call yourself The Misfit because I know you're a good man at heart. I can just look at you and tell." (Roberts/1987:517)

Once again, Grandmother tries to persuade Misfit by telling good things about Misfit. She said whether Misfit is a good man. She does it just for making Misfit will not kill her.

Alone with The Misfit, the grandmother found that she had lost her voice. There was not a cloud in the sky nor any sun. There was nothing around her but woods. She wanted to tell him that he must pray. She opened and closed her mouth several times before anything came out. Finally she found herself saying, "Jesus. Jesus," meaning, Jesus will help you, but the way she was saying it, it sounded as if she might be cursing. (Roberts/1987:519)

Almost at the end of this short story, the Grandmother realizes that Misfit will kill her. She looks around, but she knows exactly that no one will help her. Bailey, his wife and the children are already murdered. That is why Grandmother turns to God. She thinks that it is only God who can help her now. But at the same time, she also curses God for the situation that she is in. It sounds like she is hopeless.

Bailey has a wife. Flannery O'Connor, as the writer, named her ‘the children mother’ or ‘the mother’ in this short story. The mother is another character who is felt the impact of Misfit’s violence.

The children's mother had begun to make heaving noises as if she couldn't get her breath. "Lady," he asked, "would you and that little girl like to step off yonder with Bobby Lee and Hiram and join your husband?"

"Yes, thank you," the mother said faintly. Her left arm dangled helplessly and she was holding the baby, who had gone to sleep, in the other. "Hep that lady up, Hiram," The Misfit said as she struggled to
climb out of the ditch, "and Bobby Lee, you hold onto that little girl's hand." (Roberts/1987:519)

When Misfit tells the Mother to go to the woods with her two children, Bobby lee and Hiram, she knows that they will kill her and her two children. But she does not do anything, except doing Misfit’s order. Her husband and her son, John Wesley, are already killed first. She realizes that no one will help her and she is just too shock about what happens to her husband and her son. She walks to the woods slow and dangle.

4.3 Richard’s desperation in “Separating”

Another character is Richard as the father in John Updike’s “Separating”. His wife is Joan. He decides to separate with his wife. He has four kids; Judith, Richard Jr., John and Margareth. The problem is Richard does not really sure why he should do the separation. He gets along with his wife but he does not feel happy of his marriage. He does not really know what steps should be taken to fix his marriage.
4.3.1. Hopelessness

Hopelessness is having no hope, offering no hope, incurable, having no possibility of solution and impossible.

…… His family, all those he would lose, filtered through the edges of his awareness as he struggled with screw holes, splinters, opaque instructions, minutiae of metal. (Perkins/2002:1743)

Instead of figure out the solutions of his problem with his family, Richard makes himself busy with working on his house. He thinks that he prefers to do home appliances than think about his problems. Because he actually can not find the way how to solve his misfortune.

Richard was startled into attempting to force words through his tears. “We do get along, that’s the trouble, so it doesn’t show even to us----. “That we do not love each other was the rest of the sentence; he couldn’t finish it. (Perkins/2002:1745)

This means that Richard does not know what else to do. That he does not know how to feel for his wife. Like there is nothing that he can do to change all of it. He does not have any problem in his marriage. There’s a sense that Richard does not love his wife anymore.

In bed she explained, “I couldn’t cry I guess because I cried so much all spring. It really wasn’t fair. It’s your idea, and you made it look as though I was kicking you out.”
“I’m sorry,” he said. “I couldn’t stop. I wanted to but couldn’t” “You didn’t want to. You loved it. You were having your way, making a general announcement.” (Perkins/2002:1746)

It means that Richard has not the will or the power to change what he does.

He gave her a hug. “You were great too. Very reassuring to everybody. Thank you.” Guiltily, he realized he did not feel separated. (Perkins/2002:1746)
As we can see, Richard thinks that he does not have power to stop the separation. He wants to, but he just can not do it. He feels powerless. He does not offer any possibility of hope to solve his problem, except the separation. Richard knows that Joan is the perfect woman for him and his children, but he does not have feelings for her.

……His wife slept as if slain beside him. When, exasperated by his hot lids, his crowded heart, he rose from bed and dressed, she awoke enough to turn over. He told her then, “Joan, if I could undo it all, I would.” (Perkins/2002:1746)

Richard regrets for the separation. He feels sorry for Joan, his wife. But once again, he does not know how to fix the bad situation.

“Your mother and I, he said, “have decided to separate. For the summer. Nothing legal, no divorce yet. We want to see how it feels. For some years now, we haven’t been doing enough for each other, making each other as happy as we should be. Have you sensed that?” (Perkins/2002:1748)

Richard tries to explain the situation to his children. He tells his children that there is no way out, except the separation. He feels hopeless about his relationship with his wife.

Richard bent to kiss an averted face but his son, sinewy, turned and with wet cheeks embraced him and gave him a kiss, on the lips, passionate as a woman’s. in his father’s ear he moaned one word, the crucial, intelligent word: “Why?”

Why. It was a whistle of wind in a crack, a knife thrust, a window thrown open on emptiness. The white face was gone, the darkness was featureless. Richard had forgotten why. (Perkins/2002:1749)

From that line we know, that until the last moment Richard still does not know exactly why he wants to have this separation.
4.3.2 Sorrow

Sorrow is a particular cause of deep sadness or regret, associated with death or sympathy for another's misfortune.

All spring he had moved through a world of insides and outsides, of barriers and partitions. He and Joan stood as a thin barrier between the children and the truth. Each moment was a partition, with the past on one side and the future on the other, a future containing this unthinkable now. Beyond four knifelike walls a new life for him waited vaguely. His skull cupped a secret, a white face, a face both frightened and soothing, both strange and known, that he wanted to shield from tears, which he felt all about him, solid as the sunlight. (Perkins/2002:1743)

From that line, the words; ‘a white face, a face both frightened and soothing, both strange and known, that he wanted to shield from tears’ are already indicates sorrow. Richard feels sorry about himself. He is afraid of his life in the future. He does not know how to talk to his children about the separation. He feels sorry for the separation, especially for the children.

……The partition between his face and the tears broke. Richard sat down to the celebratory meal with the back of his throat aching; the champagne, the lobster seemed phases of sunshine; he saw them and tasted through tears. He blinked, swallowed, croakily joked about hay fever. The tears would not stop leaking through; they came not through a hole that could be plugged but through a permeable spot in a membrane, steadily, purely, endlessly, fruitfully. They became, his tears, a shield for himself against the others---their faces, the fact of their assembly, a last time as innocents, at a table where he sat the last time as head. Tears dropped from his nose as he broke the lobster’s back; salt flavored his champagne as he sipped it; the raw clench at the back of his throat was delicious. He could not help himself. (Perkins/2002:1744)

Looking at his family gather in the same room, it makes Richard feels sadder. Knowing this is the last time for him as a head in this assembly. He can not stop his
tears, although they are eating in the kitchen. He actually really loves his children, but he can not stop the separation.

“I’m sorry, so sorry.” Richard cried. “You were the only one who ever tried to help me with all the goddamn jobs around this place.” (Perkins/2002:1745)

Showing Richard’s feeling to his son, that all this time his son is the one who helped him, and he hopes for. That he actually does not want to make him sad because of the separation.

4.4. The influences of the separation in Richard’s family

Richard has four kids; Judith, Richard Jr., John and Margareth. The problem is Richard does not really sure why he should do the separation. He gets along with his wife but he does not feel happy of his marriage. He does not really know what steps should be taken to fix his marriage. The parents’ separation influences their children too.

Judith, imitating her mother’s factual tone, but in her youth off-key, too cool, said, “I think it silly. You should either live together or get divorced.” (Perkins/2002:1744)

Judith, as the oldest daughter, considers the separation can not be happen. Those quotations mean that she is disappointed about her parents’ decision. She feels sad about the situation, it indicates sorrow.

The boy was lighting matches. Instead of holding them to his cigarette (for they had never seen him smoke; being “good” had been his way of setting himself apart), he held them to his mother’s face, closer and closer, for her to blow out. Then he lid the whole folder---- a hiss then a torch, held against his mother’s face. Prismed by tears, the flame filled Richard’s vision; he didn’t know how it was extinguished. He
heard Margaret say. "Oh, stop showing off," and saw John, in response, break the cigarette in two and put the halves entirely into his mouth and chew, sticking out his tongue to display the shreds to his sister. (Perkins/2002:1745)

….As the boy listened, he carefully wadded a paper napkin into the leaves of his salad, fashioned a ball of paper and lettuce, and popped it into his mouth, looking around the table for the expected laughter. None came. (Perkins/2002:1745)

In these two quotations shows that John, Richard’s son, reacts wildly and the opposite of he used to be. He becomes rude and seeks his parents’ attention. John acts quite difference with his others brother and sisters.

Richard bent to kiss an averted face but his son, sinewy, turned and with wet cheeks embraced him and gave him a kiss, on the lips, passionate as a woman’s. in his father’s ear he moaned one word, the crucial, intelligent word: “Why?”

*Why.* It was a whistle of wind in a crack, a knife thrust, a window thrown open on emptiness. The white face was gone, the darkness was featureless. Richard had forgotten why. (Perkins/2002:1749)

Dickie (Richard Jr.) asks to his father about the reasons why his father wants to do the separation sadly. His heart is broken because of his parents separation. He does not want it happen. By asking that question, it means that Dickie indicates sorrow.

**CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

**5.1 Conclusion**

After doing the analysis, there are several conclusions. They are:
1. The Misfit in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”, represents those three characters; hopelessness, sorrow and violence. He mostly looses his hope about happiness. He feels really sad about his life, especially his past life. He also does not mind to do the violence to anybody.

2. The Misfit’s violences impact other characters in “A Good Man is Hard to Find”, especially the Grandmother. The Misfit’s violences mostly make the other characters indicate some characteristics of desperation.

3. Richard only represents two of the characteristics of desperation, which are; hopelessness and sorrow. He does not show any violence characteristic in “Separating”. So, it means there is a difference between Richard and Misfit in representing their desperation.

4. Richard, his wife and also his children suffer from the separation. His wife is sad about the separation and she also feels hopeless about it. Richard’s children represent their disappointed of the separation in some ways. All of them are very sad about it and they also have no clue how to make their parents get together again.

5.2 Suggestion

There are suggestions of the thesis:

1. Reading Literature will enrich the literary knowledge of the readers. Hopefully, by reading and understanding this analysis, it will be valuable experience for readers.
2. The writer wants to suggest that analyzing short stories is very interesting. It also has moral lesson in it. So, it will be very useful.

3. It is also suggested for the readers who interest in studying about desperation to use more reliable sources to make a better analysis of desperation.

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**APPENDICES**

**FLANNERY O’CONNOR’S A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND**
The grandmother didn't want to go to Florida. She wanted to visit some of her connections in east Tennessee and she was seizing at every chance to change Bailey's mind. Bailey was the son she lived with, her only boy. He was sitting on the edge of his chair at the table, bent over the orange sports section of the Journal. "Now look here, Bailey," she said, "see here, read this," and she stood with one hand on her thin hip and the other rattling the newspaper at his bald head. "Here this fellow that calls himself The Misfit is 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 loose in it. I couldn't answer to my conscience if I did."

Bailey didn't look up from his reading so she wheeled around then and faced the children's mother, a young woman in slacks, whose face was as broad and innocent as a cabbage and was tied around with a green head-kerchief that had two points on the top like rabbit's ears. She was sitting on the sofa, feeding the baby his apricots out of a jar. "The children have been to Florida before," the old lady said. "You all ought to take them somewhere else for a change so they would see different parts of the world and be broad. They never have been to east Tennessee."

The children's mother didn't seem to hear her but the eight-year-old boy, John Wesley, a stocky child with glasses, said, "If you don't want to go to Florida, why don'tcha stay at home?" He and the little girl, June Star, were reading the funny papers on the floor.

"She wouldn't stay at home to be queen for a day," June Star said without raising her yellow head.

"Yes and what would you do if this fellow, The Misfit, caught you?" the grandmother asked.

"I'd smack his face," John Wesley said.

"She wouldn't stay at home for a million bucks," June Star said. "Afraid she'd miss something. She has to go everywhere we go."

"All right, Miss," the grandmother said. "Just remember that the next time you want me to curl your hair."

June Star said her hair was naturally curly.

The next morning the grandmother was the first one in the car, ready to go. She had her big black valise that looked like the head of a hippopotamus in one corner, and underneath it she was hiding a basket with Pitty Sing, the cat, in it. She didn't intend for the cat to be left alone in the house for three days because he would miss her too much and she was afraid he might brush against one of her gas burners and accidentally asphyxiate himself. Her son, Bailey, didn't like to arrive at a motel with a cat.

She sat in the middle of the back seat with John Wesley and June Star on either side of her. Bailey and the children's mother and the baby sat in front and they left Atlanta at eight forty-five with the mileage on the car at 55890. The grandmother wrote this down because she thought it would be interesting to say how many miles they had been when they got back. It took them twenty minutes to reach the outskirts of the city.

The old lady settled herself comfortably, removing her white cotton gloves and putting them up with her purse on the shelf in front of the back window. The children's mother still had on slacks and still had her head tied up in a green kerchief, but the grandmother had on a navy blue straw sailor hat with a bunch of white violets on the brim and a navy blue dress with a small white dot in the print. Her collars and cuffs were white organdy trimmed with lace and at her neckline she had pinned a purple spray of cloth violets containing a sachet. In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once that she was a lady.

She said she thought it was going to be a good day for driving, neither too hot nor too cold, and she cautioned Bailey that the speed limit was fifty-five miles an hour and that the patrolmen hid themselves behind billboards and small clumps of trees and sped out after you before you had a chance to slow down. She pointed out interesting details of the scenery: Stone Mountain; the blue granite that in some places came up to both sides of the highway; the brilliant red clay banks slightly streaked with purple; and the various crops that made rows of green lace-work on the ground. The trees were full of silver-white sunlight and the meaniest of them sparkled. The children were reading comic magazines and their mother and gone back to sleep.

"Let's go through Georgia fast so we won't have to look at it much," John Wesley said.
"If I were a little boy," said the grandmother, "I wouldn't talk about my native state that way. Tennessee has the mountains and Georgia has the hills."

"Tennessee is just a hillbilly dumping ground," John Wesley said, "and Georgia is a lousy state too."

"You said it," June Star said.

"In my time," said the grandmother, folding her thin veined fingers, "children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else. People did right then. Oh look at the cute little pickaniny!" she said and pointed to a Negro child standing in the door of a shack. "Wouldn't that make a picture, now?" she asked and they all turned and looked at the little Negro out of the back window. He waved.

"He didn't have any britches on," June Star said.

"He probably didn't have any," the grandmother explained. "Little riggers in the country don't have things like we do. If I could paint, I'd paint that picture," she said.

The children exchanged comic books.

The grandmother offered to hold the baby and the children's mother passed him over the front seat to her. She set him on her knee and bounced him and told him about the things they were passing. She rolled her eyes and screwed up her mouth and stuck her leathery thin face into his smooth bland one. Occasionally he gave her a faraway smile. They passed a large cotton field with five or six graves fenced in the middle of it, like a small island. "Look at the graveyard!" the grandmother said, pointing it out. "That was the old family burying ground. That belonged to the plantation."

"Where's the plantation?" John Wesley asked.

"Gone With the Wind" said the grandmother. "Ha. Ha."

When the children finished all the comic books they had brought, they opened the lunch and ate it. The grandmother ate a peanut butter sandwich and an olive and would not let the children throw the box and the paper napkins out the window. When there was nothing else to do they played a game by choosing a cloud and making the other two guess what shape it suggested. John Wesley took one the shape of a cow and June Star guessed a cow and John Wesley said, no, an automobile, and June Star said he didn't play fair, and they began to slap each other over the grandmother.

The grandmother said she would tell them a story if they would keep quiet. When she told a story, she rolled her eyes and waved her head and was very dramatic. She said once when she was a maiden lady she had been courted by a Mr. Edgar Atkins Teagarden from Jasper, Georgia. She said he was a very good-looking man and a gentleman and that he brought her a watermelon every Saturday afternoon with his initials cut in it, E. A. T. Well, one Saturday, she said, Mr. Teagarden brought the watermelon and there was nobody at home and he left it on the front porch and returned in his buggy to Jasper, but she never got the watermelon, she said, because a nigger boy ate it when he saw the initials, E. A. T. ! This story tickled John Wesley's funny bone and he giggled and giggled but June Star didn't think it was any good. She said she wouldn't marry a man that just brought her a watermelon on Saturday. The grandmother said she would have done well to marry Mr. Teagarden because he was a gentle man and had bought Coca-Cola stock when it first came out and that he had died only a few years ago, a very wealthy man.

They stopped at The Tower for barbecued sandwich. The Tower was a part stucco and part wood filling station and dance hall set in a clearing outside of Timothy. A fat man named Red Sammy Butts ran it and there were signs stuck here and there on the building and for miles up and down the highway saying, TRY RED SAMMY'S FAMOUS BARBECUE. NONE LIKE FAMOUS RED SAMMY'S! RED SAM! THE FAT BOY WITH THE HAPPY LAUGH. A VETERAN! RED SAMMY'S YOUR MAN!

Red Sammy was lying on the bare ground outside The Tower with his head under a truck while a gray monkey about a foot high, chained to a small chinaberry tree, chattered nearby. The monkey sprang back into the tree and got on the highest limb as soon as he saw the children jump out of the car and run toward him.

Inside, The Tower was a long dark room with a counter at one end and tables at the other and dancing space in the middle. They all sat down at a board table next to the nickelodeon and Red Sam's wife, a tall burnt-brown woman with hair and eyes lighter than her skin, came and took their order. The children's mother put a dime in the machine and played "The Tennessee Waltz," and the grandmother
said that tune always made her want to dance. She asked Bailey if he would like to dance but he only
glared at her. He didn't have a naturally sunny disposition like she did and trips made him nervous. The
grandmother's brown eyes were very bright. She swayed her head from side to side and pretended she
was dancing in her chair. June Star said play something she could tap to so the children's mother put in
another dime and played a fast number and June Star stepped out onto the dance floor and did her tap
routine.

"Ain't she cute?" Red Sam's wife said, leaning over the counter. "Would you like to come be my little girl?"

"No I certainly wouldn't," June Star said. "I wouldn't live in a broken-down place like this for a
million bucks!" and she ran back to the table.

"Ain't she cute?" the woman repeated, stretching her mouth politely.

"Ain't you ashamed?" hissed the grandmother.

Red Sam came in and told his wife to quit lounging on the counter and hurry up with these
people's order. His khaki trousers reached just to his hip bones and his stomach hung over them like a
sack of meal swaying under his shirt. He came over and sat down at a table nearby and let out a
combination sigh and yodel. "You can't win," he said. "You can't win," and he wiped his sweating red
face off with a gray handkerchief. "These days you don't know who to trust," he said. "Ain't that the
truth?"

"People are certainly not nice like they used to be," said the grandmother.

"Two fellers come in here last week," Red Sammy said, "driving a Chrysler. It was a old beat-up
car but it was a good one and these boys looked all right to me. Said they worked at the mill and
you know I let them fellers charge the gas they bought? Now why did I do that?"

"Because you're a good man!" the grandmother said at once.

"Yes'm, I suppose so," Red Sam said as if he were struck with this answer.

His wife brought the orders, carrying the five plates all at once without a tray, two in each
hand and one balanced on her arm. "It isn't a soul in this green world of God's that you can trust," she
said. "And I don't count nobody out of that, not nobody," she repeated, looking at Red Sammy.

"Did you read about that criminal, The Misfit, that's escaped?" asked the grandmother.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he didn't attack this place right here," said the woman. "If he
hears about it being here, I wouldn't be none surprised to see him. If he hears it's two cent in the cash
register, I wouldn't be a tall surprised if he . . ."

"That'll do," Red Sam said. "Go bring these people their Co'Colas," and the woman went off
to get the rest of the order.

"A good man is hard to find," Red Sammy said. "Everything is getting terrible. I remember
the day you could go off and leave your screen door unlatched. Not no more."

He and the grandmother discussed better times. The old lady said that in her opinion Europe
was entirely to blame for the way things were now. She said the way Europe acted you would think we
were made of money and Red Sam said it was no use talking about it, she was exactly right. The
children ran outside into the white sunlight and looked at the monkey in the lacy chinaberry tree. He
was busy catching fleas on himself and biting each one carefully between his teeth as if it were a
delicacy.

They drove off again into the hot afternoon. The grandmother took cat naps and woke up
every few minutes with her own snoring. Outside of Toombsboro she woke up and recalled an old
plantation that she had visited in this neighborhood once when she was a young lady. She said the
house had six white columns across the front and that there was an avenue of oaks leading up to it and
two little wooden trellis arbors on either side in front where you sat down with your suitor after a stroll
in the garden. She recalled exactly which road to turn off to get to it. She knew that Bailey would not
be willing to lose any time looking at an old house, but the more she talked about it, the more she
wanted to see it once again and find out if the little twin arbors were still standing. "There was a
secret-panel in this house," she said craftily, not telling the truth but wishing that she were, "and the
story went that all the family silver was hidden in it when Sherman came through but it was never
found . . ."

"Hey!" John Wesley said. "Let's go see it! We'll find it! We'll poke all the woodwork and find
it! Who lives there? Where do you turn off at? Hey Pop, can't we turn off there?"
"We never have seen a house with a secret panel!" June Star shrieked. "Let's go to the house with the secret panel! Hey Pop, can't we go see the house with the secret panel!"

"It's not far from here, I know," the grandmother said. "It wouldn't take over twenty minutes."

Bailey was looking straight ahead. His jaw was as rigid as a horseshoe. "No," he said.

The children began to yell and scream that they wanted to see the house with the secret panel. John Wesley kicked the back of the front seat and June Star hung over her mother's shoulder and whined desperately into her ear that they never had any fun even on their vacation, that they could never do what THEY wanted to do. The baby began to scream and John Wesley kicked the back of the seat so hard that his father could feel the blows in his kidney.

"All right!" he shouted and drew the car to a stop at the side of the road. "Will you all shut up? Will you all just shut up for one second? If you don't shut up, we won't go anywhere."

"It would be very educational for them," the grandmother murmured.

"All right," Bailey said, "but get this: this is the only time we're going to stop for anything like this. This is the one and only time."

"The dirt road that you have to turn down is about a mile back," the grandmother directed. "I marked it when we passed."

"A dirt road," Bailey groaned.

After they had turned around and were headed toward the dirt road, the grandmother recalled other points about the house, the beautiful glass over the front doorway and the candle-lamp in the hall. John Wesley said that the secret panel was probably in the fireplace.

"You can't go inside this house," Bailey said. "You don't know who lives there."

"While you all talk to the people in front, I'll run around behind and get in a window," John Wesley suggested.

"We'll all stay in the car," his mother said.

They turned onto the dirt road and the car raced roughly along in a swirl of pink dust. The grandmother recalled the times when there were no paved roads and thirty miles was a day's journey. The dirt road was hilly and there were sudden washes in it and sharp curves on dangerous embankments. All at once they would be on a hill, looking down over the blue tops of trees for miles around, then the next minute, they would be in a red depression with the dust-coated trees looking down on them.

"This place had better turn up in a minute," Bailey said, "or I'm going to turn around."

The road looked as if no one had traveled on it in months.

"It's not much farther," the grandmother said and just as she said it, a horrible thought came to her. The thought was so embarrassing that she turned red in the face and her eyes dilated and her feet jumped up, upsetting her valise in the corner. The instant the valise moved, the newspaper top she had over the basket under it rose with a snarl and Pitty Sing, the cat, sprang onto Bailey's shoulder.

The children were thrown to the floor and their mother, clutching the baby, was thrown out the door onto the ground; the old lady was thrown into the front seat. The car turned over once and landed right-side-up in a gulch off the side of the road. Bailey remained in the driver's seat with the cat gray-striped with a broad white face and an orange nose clinging to his neck like a caterpillar.

As soon as the children saw they could move their arms and legs, they scrambled out of the car, shouting, "We've had an ACCIDENT!" The grandmother was curled up under the dashboard, hoping she was injured so that Bailey's wrath would not come down on her all at once. The horrible thought she had had before the accident was that the house she had remembered so vividly was not in Georgia but in Tennessee.

Bailey removed the cat from his neck with both hands and flung it out the window against the side of a pine tree. Then he got out of the car and started looking for the children's mother. She was sitting against the side of the red gutted ditch, holding the screaming baby, but she only had a cut down her face and a broken shoulder. "We've had an ACCIDENT!" the children screamed in a frenzy of delight.

"But nobody's killed," June Star said with disappointment 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. They all sat down in the ditch, except the children, to recover from the shock. They were all shaking.

"Maybe a car will come along," said the children's mother hoarsely.


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"I believe I have injured an organ," said the grandmother, pressing her side, but no one answered her. Bailey's teeth were clattering. He had on a yellow sport shirt with bright blue parrots designed in it and his face was as yellow as the shirt. The grandmother decided that she would not mention that the house was in Tennessee.

The road was about ten feet above and they could see only the tops of the trees on the other side of it. Behind the ditch they were sitting in there were more woods, tall and dark and deep. In a few minutes they saw a car some distance away on top of a hill, coming slowly as if the occupants were watching them. The grandmother stood up and waved both arms dramatically to attract their attention. The car continued to come on slowly, disappeared around a bend and appeared again, moving even slower, on top of the hill they had gone over. It was a big black battered hearselike automobile. There were three men in it.

It came to a stop just over them and for some minutes, the driver looked down with a steady expressionless gaze to where they were sitting, and didn't speak. Then he turned his head and muttered something to the other two and they got out. One was a fat boy in black trousers and a red sweat shirt with a silver stallion embossed on the front of it. He moved around on the right side of them and stood staring, his mouth partly open in a kind of loose grin. The other had on khaki pants and a blue striped coat and a gray hat pulled down very low, hiding most of his face. He came around slowly on the left side. Neither spoke.

The driver got out of the car and stood by the side of it, looking down at them. He was an older man than the other two. His hair was just beginning to gray and he wore silver-rimmed spectacles that gave him a scholarly look. He had a long creased face and didn't have on any shirt or undershirt. He had on blue jeans that were too tight for him and was holding a black hat and a gun. The two boys also had guns.

"We've had an ACCIDENT!" the children screamed.

The grandmother had the peculiar feeling that the bespectacled man was someone she knew. His face was as familiar to her as if she had known him all her life but she could not recall who he was. He moved away from the car and began to come down the embankment, placing his feet carefully so that he wouldn't slip. He had on tan and white shoes and no socks, and his ankles were red and thin.

"Good afternoon," he said. "I see you all had you a little spill."

"We turned over twice!" said the grandmother.

"Once", he corrected. "We seen it happen. Try their car and see will it run, Hiram," he said quietly to the boy with the gray hat.

"What you got that gun for?" John Wesley asked. "Whatcha gonna do with that gun?"

"Lady," the man said to the children's mother. "would you mind calling them children to sit down by you? Children make me nervous. I want all you all to sit down right together there where you're at."

"What are you telling US what to do for?" June Star asked.

"Look here now," Bailey began suddenly, "we're in a predicament! We're in . . ."

Behind them the line of woods gaped like a dark open mouth. "Come here," said their mother. "Look here now," Bailey began suddenly, "we're in a predicament! We're in . . ."

The grandmother shrieked. She scrambled to her feet and stood staring. "You're The Misfit!!" she said. "I recognized you at once!"

"Yes'm," the man said, smiling slightly as if he were pleased in spite of himself to be known, "but it would have been better for all of you, lady, if you hadn't of reckernized me."

Bailey turned his head sharply and said something to his mother that shocked even the children. The old lady began to cry and The Misfit reddened.

"Lady," he said, "don't you get upset. Sometimes a man says things he don't mean. I don't reckon he meant to talk to you thataway."

"You wouldn't shoot a lady, would you?" the grandmother said and removed a clean handkerchief from her cuff and began to slap at her eyes with it.

The Misfit pointed the toe of his shoe into the ground and made a little hole and then covered it up again. "I would hate to have to," he said.

"Listen," the grandmother almost screamed, "I know you're a good man. You don't look a bit like you have common blood. I know you must come from nice people!"
"Yes mam," he said, "finest people in the world." When he smiled he showed a row of strong white teeth. "God never made a finer woman than my mother and my daddy's heart was pure gold," he said. The boy with the red sweat shirt had come around behind them and was standing with his gun at his hip. The Misfit squatted down on the ground. "Watch them children, Bobby Lee," he said. "You know they make me nervous." He looked at the six of them huddled together in front of him and he seemed to be embarrassed as if he couldn't think of anything to say. "Ain't a cloud in the sky," he remarked, looking up at it. "Don't see no sun but don't see no cloud neither."

"Yes, it's a beautiful day," said the grandmother. "Listen," she said, "you shouldn't call yourself The Misfit because I know you're a good man at heart. I can just look at you and tell."

"Hush!" Bailey yelled. "Hush! Everybody shut up and let me handle this!" He was squatting in the position of a runner about to sprint forward but he didn't move.

"I pre-chate that, lady," The Misfit said and drew a little circle in the ground with the butt of his gun.

"It'll take a half a hour to fix this here car," Hiram called, looking over the raised hood of it.

"Well, first you and Bobby Lee get him and that little boy to step over yonder with you," The Misfit said, pointing to Bailey and John Wesley. "The boys want to ast you something," he said to Bailey. "Would you mind stepping back in them woods there with them?"

"Listen," Bailey began, "we're in a terrible predicament! Nobody realizes what this is," and his voice cracked. His eyes were as blue and intense as the parrots in his shirt and he remained perfectly still.

The grandmother reached up to adjust her hat brim as if she were going to the woods with him but it came off in her hand. She stood staring at it and after a second she let it fall on the ground. Hiram pulled Bailey up by the arm as if he were assisting an old man. John Wesley caught hold of his father's hand and Bobby Lee followed. They went off toward the woods and just as they reached the dark edge, Bailey turned and supporting himself against a gray naked pine trunk, he shouted, "I'll be back in a minute, Mamma, wait on me!"

"Come back this instant!" his mother shrilled but they all disappeared into the woods.

"Bailey Boy!" the grandmother called in a tragic voice but she found she was looking at The Misfit squatting on the ground in front of her. "I just know you're a good man," she said desperately. "You're not a bit common!"

"Nome, I ain't a good man," The Misfit said after a second as if he had considered her statement carefully, "but I ain't the worst in the world neither. My daddy said I was a different breed of dog from my brothers and sisters. 'You know,' Daddy said, 'it's some that can live their whole life out without asking about it and it's others has to know why it is, and this boy is one of the latters. He's going to be into everything!' He put on his black hat and looked up suddenly and then away deep into the woods as if he were embarrassed again. "I'm sorry I don't have on a shirt before you ladies," he said, hunching his shoulders slightly. "We buried our clothes that we had on when we escaped and we're just making do until we can get better. We borrowed these from some folks we met," he explained.

"That's perfectly all right," the grandmother said. "Maybe Bailey has an extra shirt in his suitcase."

"I'll look and see terrectly," The Misfit said.

"Where are they taking him?" the children's mother screamed.

"Daddy was a card himself," The Misfit said. "You couldn't put anything over on him. He never got in trouble with the Authorities though. Just had the knack of handling them."

"You could be honest too if you'd only try," said the grandmother. "Think how wonderful it would be to settle down and live a comfortable life and not have to think about somebody chasing you all the time."

The Misfit kept scratching in the ground with the butt of his gun as if he were thinking about it. "Yestm, somebody is always after you," he murmured.

The grandmother noticed how thin his shoulder blades were just behind his hat because she was standing up looking down on him. "Do you every pray?" she asked.

He shook his head. All she saw was the black hat wiggle between his shoulder blades. "Nome," he said.
There was a pistol shot from the woods, followed closely by another. Then silence. The old lady's head jerked around. She could hear the wind move through the tree tops like a long satisfied insuck of breath. "Bailey Boy!" she called.

"I was a gospel singer for a while," The Misfit said. "I been most everything. Been in the arm service both land and sea, at home and abroad, been twist married, been an undertaker, been with the railroads, plowed Mother Earth, been in a tornado, seen a man burnt alive oncet," and he looked up at the children's mother and the little girl who were sitting close together, their faces white and their eyes glassy; "I even seen a woman flogged," he said.

"Pray, pray," the grandmother began, "pray, pray . . ."

I never was a bad boy that I remember of," The Misfit said in an almost dreamy voice, "but somewheres along the line I done something wrong and got sent to the penitentiary. I was buried alive," and he looked up and held her attention to him by a steady stare.

"That's when you should have started to pray," she said. "What did you do to get sent to the penitentiary that first time?"

"Turn to the right, it was a wall," The Misfit said, looking up again at the cloudless sky. "Turn to the left, it was a wall. Look up it was a ceiling, look down it was a floor. I forget what I done, lady. I set there and set there, trying to remember what it was I done and I ain't recalled it to this day. Oncet in a while, I would think it was coming to me, but it never come."

"Maybe they put you in by mistake," the old lady said vaguely.

"Nome," he said. "It wasn't no mistake. They had the papers on me."

"You must have stolen something," she said.

The Misfit sneered slightly. "Nobody had nothing I wanted," he said. "It was a head-doctor at the penitentiary said what I had done was kill my daddy but I known that for a lie. My daddy died in nineteen ought nineteen of the epidemic flu and I never had a thing to do with it. He was buried in the Mount Hopewell Baptist churchyard and you can go there and see for yourself."

"If you would pray," the old lady said, "Jesus would help you."

"That's right," The Misfit said.

"Well then, why don't you pray?" she asked trembling with delight suddenly.

"I don't want no hep," he said. "I'm doing all right by myself."

Bobby Lee and Hiram came ambling back from the woods. Bobby Lee was dragging a yellow shirt with bright blue parrots in it.

"Throw me that shirt, Bobby Lee," The Misfit said. The shirt came flying at him and landed on his shoulder and he put it on. The grandmother couldn't name what the shirt reminded her of: "No, lady," The Misfit said while he was buttoning it up. "I found out the crime don't matter. You can do one thing or you can do another, kill a man or take a tire off his car, because sooner or later you're going to forget what it was you done and just be punished for it."

The children's mother had begun to make heaving noises as if she couldn't get her breath. "Lady," he asked, "would you and that little girl like to step off yonder with Bobby Lee and Hiram and join your husband?"

"Yes, thank you," the mother said faintly. Her left arm dangled helplessly and she was holding the baby, who had gone to sleep, in the other. "Hep that lady up, Hiram," The Misfit said as she struggled to climb out of the ditch, "and Bobby Lee, you hold onto that little girl's hand."

"I don't want to hold hands with him," June Star said. "He reminds me of a pig."

The fat boy blushed and laughed and caught her by the arm and pulled her off into the woods after Hiram and her mother.

Alone with The Misfit, the grandmother found that she had lost her voice. There was not a cloud in the sky nor any sun. There was nothing around her but woods. She wanted to tell him that he must pray. She opened and closed her mouth several times before anything came out. Finally she found herself saying. "Jesus. Jesus," meaning, Jesus will help you, but the way she was saying it, it sounded as if she might be cursing.

"Yes'm, The Misfit said as if he agreed. "Jesus shown everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn't committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me. Of course," he said, "they never shown me my papers. That's why I sign myself now. I said long ago, you get you a signature and sign everything you
do and keep a copy of it. Then you'll know what you done and you can hold up the crime to the punishment and see do they match and in the end you'll have something to prove you ain't been treated right. I call myself The Misfit," he said, "because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment."

There was a piercing scream from the woods, followed closely by a pistol report. "Does it seem right to you, lady, that one is punished a heap and another ain't punished at all?"

"Jesus!" the old lady cried. "You've got good blood! I know you wouldn't shoot a lady! I know you come from nice people! Pray! Jesus, you ought not to shoot a lady. I'll give you all the money I've got!"

"Lady," The Misfit said, looking beyond her far into the woods, "there never was a body that give the undertaker a tip."

There were two more pistol reports and the grandmother raised her head like a parched old turkey hen crying for water and called, "Bailey Boy, Bailey Boy!" as if her heart would break.

"Jesus was the only One that ever raised the dead," The Misfit continued, "and He shouldn't have done it. He shown everything off balance. If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away everything and follow Him, and if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness," he said and his voice had become almost a snarl.

"Maybe He didn't raise the dead," the old lady mumbled, not knowing what she was saying and feeling so dizzy that she sank down in the ditch with her legs twisted under her.

"I wasn't there so I can't say He didn't," The Misfit said. "I wisht I had of been there," he said, hitting the ground with his fist. "It ain't right I wasn't there because if I had of been there I would of known. Listen lady," he said in a high voice, "if I had of been there I would of known and I wouldn't be like I am now." His voice seemed about to crack and the grandmother's head cleared for an instant. She saw the man's face twisted close to her own as if he were going to cry and she murmured, "Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children!" She reached out and touched him on the shoulder. The Misfit sprang back as if a snake had bitten him and shot her three times through the chest. Then he put his gun down on the ground and took off his glasses and began to clean them.

Hiram and Bobby Lee returned from the woods and stood over the ditch, looking down at the grandmother who half sat and half lay in a puddle of blood with her legs crossed under her like a child's and her face smiling up at the cloudless sky.

Without his glasses, The Misfit's eyes were red-rimmed and pale and defenseless-looking. "Take her off and throw her where you thrown the others," he said, picking up the cat that was rubbing itself against his leg.

"She was a talker, wasn't she?" Bobby Lee said, sliding down the ditch with a yodel.

"She would of been a good woman," The Misfit said, "if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life."

"Some fun!" Bobby Lee said.

"Shut up, Bobby Lee," The Misfit said. "It's no real pleasure in life."
JOHN UPDIKE’S SEPARATING

The day was fair. Brilliant. All that June the weather had mocked the Maples’ internal misery with solid sunlight—golden shafts cascades of green in which their conversation had wormed unseeing, their sad murmuring selves the only stain in nature. Usually by this time of the year they had acquired tans; but when they met their elder daughter’s plane on her return from a year in England they were almost as pale as she, though Judith was too dazzled by the sunny opulent jumble of her native land to notice. They did not spoil her homecoming by telling her immediately. Wait a few days, let her recover from jet lag, had been one of their formulations, in that string of grey dialogues—over coffee, over cocktails, over Cointreau—that had shaped the strategy of their dissolution, while the earth performed its annual stunts of renewal unnoticed beyond their closed windows. Richard has thought to leave at Easter; Joan had insisted they wait until the four children were at last assembled, with all exams passed and ceremonies attended, and the bauble of summer to console them. So he had dragged away, in love, in dread, repairing screens, getting the mowers sharpened, rolling and patching their new tennis court.

The court, clay, had come through its first winter pitted and windswept bare of redcoat. Years ago the Maples had observed how often, among their friends, divorced followed a dramatic home improvement, as if the marriage were making one last effort to live; their own worst crisis had come amid the plaster dust and exposed plumbing of a kitchen renovation. Yet, a summer ago, as canary-yellow bulldozers gaily churned a grassy, daisy-dotted knoll into a muddy plateau, and a crew of pigtailed young men raked and tamped clay into a plane, this transformation did not strike them as ominous, but festive in its impudence; their marriage could rend the earth for fun. The net spring, waking each day at dawn to a sliding sensation as if the bed were being tipped, Richard found the barren tennis court—its net tapes still rolled in the barn—an environment congruous with his mood of purposeful desolation, and the crumbling of handfuls of clay into cracks and holes (dogs has frolicked on the court in a thaw; rivulets had eroded trenches) an activity suitably elemental and interminable. In his sealed heart he hoped the day would never come.

Now it was here. A Friday. Judith was re-acclimated; all four children were assembled, before jobs and camps and visits again scattered them. Joan thought they should be told one by one. Richard was for making an announcement at the table. He said, “I think just making an announcement is a cop-out. They start quarrelling and playing to each other instead of focusing. They’re each individuals, you know, not just some corporate obstacle to your freedom.”

“O.K., O.K. I agree.” Joan’s plan was exact. That evening, they were giving Judith a belated welcome-home dinner, of lobster and champagne. Then, the party over, they, the two of them, who nineteen years before would push her in a baby carriage along fifth Avenue to Washington Square, were to walk her out of the house, to the bridge across the salt creek, and tell her, swearing her to secrecy. Then Richard Jr., who was going directly from work to a rock concert in Boston, would be told, either late when he returned on the train or early Saturday morning before he went off to his job; he was seventeen and employed as one of a golf course maintenance crew. Then the two younger children, John and Margaret, could, as the morning wore on, be informed.

“Mopped up, as it were,” Richard said.

“Do you have any better plan? That leaves you to the rest of Saturday to answer any questions, pack, and make your wonderful departure.”

“No,” he said, meaning he had no better plan, and agreed to hers, thought to him it showed an edge of false order, a hidden plea for control, like Joan’s long chore lists and financial accountings and, in the days when he first knew her, her too-copious lecture notes. Her planed turned one hurdle in to four—four knife-sharp walls, each with a sheer blind drop on the other side.
All spring he had moved through a world of insiders and outsiders, of barriers and partitions. He and Joan stood as a thin barrier between the children and the truth. Each moment was a partition, with the past on one side and the future on the other, a future containing this unthinkable now. Beyond four knifelike walls a new life for him waited vaguely. His skull cupped a secret, a white face, a face both frightened and soothing, both strange and known, that he wanted to shield from tears, which he felt all about him, solid as the sunlight. So haunted, he had become obsessed with battering down the house against his absence, replacing screens and sash cords, hinges and latches—a Houdini making things snug before his escape.

The lock. He had still to replace a lock on one of the doors of the screened porch. The task, like most such, proved more difficult than he had imagined. The old lock, aluminum frozen by corrosion, had been deliberately rendered obsolete by manufacturers. Three hardware stores had nothing that even approximately matched the mortised hole its removal (surprisingly easy) left. Another hole had to be gouged, with bits too small and saws too big, and the old hole fitted with a block of wood—the chisels dull, the saw rusty, his fingers thick with lack of sleep. The sun poured down, beyond the porch, on a world of neglect. The bushes already need pruning, the windward side of the house was shedding flakes of paint, rain would get in when he was gone, insects, rot, death. His family, all those he would lose, filtered through the edges of his awareness as he struggled with screw holes, splinters, opaque instructions, minutiae of metal.

Judith sat on the porch, a princess returned from exile. She regaled them with stories of fuel shortages, of bomb scares in the Underground, of Pakistani workmen loudly lusting after her as she walked past on her way to dance school. Joan came and went, in and out of the house, calmer than she should have been, praising his struggles with the lock as if this were one more and not the last of their long succession of shared chores. The younger of his sons for a few minutes held the rickety screen door while his father clumsily hammered and chiseled each blow a kind of sob in Richard’s ear. His younger daughter, having been at a slumber party, slept on the porch hammock through all the noise—heavy and pink, trusting and forsaken. Time, like the sunlight, continued relentlessly; the sunlight slowly slanted. Today was one of the longest days. The locked clicked, worked. He was through. He had a drink; he drank it on the porch, listening to his daughter. “It was so sweet,” she was saying, “during the worst of it, how all the butchers and bakery shops kept open by candlelight. They’re all so plucky and cute. From the papers, things sounded so much worse here—people shooting people in gas lines, and everybody freezing.”

Richard asked her, “Do you want to live in England forever?” Forever: the concept, now a reality upon him, pressed and scratched at the back of his throat.

“No,” Judith confessed, turning her oval face to him, its easy still childishly far apart, but the lips set as over something succulent and satisfactory. “I was anxious to come home. I’m an American.” He was a woman. They had raised her; he and Joan had endured together to raise her, alone of the four. The others had still some raising left in them. Yet it was the thought of telling Judith—the image of her, their first baby, walking between them arm in arm to the bridge—that broke him. The partition between his face and the tears broke. Richard sat down to the celebratory meal with the back of his throat aching; the champagne, the lobster seemed phases of sunshine; he saw them and tasted them through tears. He blinked, swallowed, croakily joked about hay fever. The tears would not stop leaking through; they came not through a hole that could be plugged but through a permeable spot in membrane, steadily, purely, endlessly, fruitfully. They became his tears, a shield for himself against these others—their faces, the fact of their assembly, a last time as innocents, at the table where he sat the last time as head. Tears dropped from his nose as he broke the lobster’s back; salt flavored his champagne as he sipped it; the raw clench at the back of the his throat was delicious. He could not help himself.

His children tried to ignore his tears. Judith, on his right, lit a cigarette, gazed upward in the direction of her to energetic, too sophisticated exhalation; on her other side, John earnestly bent his face to the extraction of the last morsels—legs, tail segments—from scarlet corpse. Joan, at the opposite end of the table, glanced at him surprised, her reproach displaced by a quick grimace, of forgiveness, or salute to his superior gift of strategy. Between them, Margaret, no longer called Bean, thirteen and large for her age, gazed from other side of his pane of tears as if into a shopwindow at something she coveted—at her father, a crystalline heap of splinters and memories. It was not she,
however, but John who, in the kitchen, as they cleared the plates and carapaces away, asked Joan the question: "Why is Daddy crying?"

Richard heard the question but not the murmured answer. Then heard Bean cry, "Oh, no-oh!"—the faintly dramatized exclamation of one who had long expected it.

John returned to the table carrying a bowl of salad. He nodded tersely at his father and his lips shaped the conspiratorial words "he told."

"Told what?" Richard asked aloud, insanely.

The boy sat down as if to rebuke his father’s distraction with the example of his own good manners. He said quietly, "The separation."

Joan and Margaret returned; the child, in Richard’s twisted vision, seemed diminished in size, and relived, relived to have had the bogieman at last proved real. He called out to her—the distances at the table had grown immense—"You knew, you always knew," but the clenching at the back of his throat prevented him from making sense of it. From afar he heard Joan talking, levelly, sensibly, reciting what they had prepared: it was a separation for the summer, an experiment. She and Daddy both agreed it would be good for them; they needed space and time to think; they liked each other but did not make each other happy enough somehow.

Judith, imitating her mother’s factual tone, but in her youth off-key, too cool, said, "I think it’s silly. You should either live together or get divorced.”

Richard’s crying, like a wave that has crested and crashed, had become tumultuous; by it was overtopped by another tumult, for John, who had been so reserved, now grew larger and larger at the table. Perhaps his younger sister’s being credited with knowing set him off. "Why didn’t you tell us?" he asked, in a large round voice quite unlike his own. "You should have told us you weren’t getting along."

Richard was startled into attempting to force words through his tears. "We do get along, that’s the trouble, so it doesn’t show even to us—" That we do not love each other was the rest of the sentence; he couldn’t finish it.

Joan finished for him, in her style. "And we’ve always, especially, loved our children."

John was not mollified. "What do you care about us?" he boomed. "We’re just little things you had." His sisters’ laughing forced a laugh from him, which he turned hard and parodic, "Ha ha ha." Richard and Joan realized simultaneously that the child was drunk, on Judith’s homecoming champagne. Feeling bound to keep the center of the stage, John took a cigarette from Judith’s pack, pocked it into his mouth, let it hang from his lower lip, and squinted like a gangster.

"You’re not little things we had," Richard called to him. "You’re the whole point. But you’re grown. Or almost."

The boy was lighting matches. Instead of holding them to his cigarette (for they had never seen him smoke; being "good" had been his way of setting himself apart), he held them to his mother’s face, closer and closer, for her to blow out. Then he lit the whole folder—a hiss and then a torch, held against his mother’s face. Prised, by tears, the flame filled Richard’s vision; he didn’t know how it was extinguished. He heard Margaret say, "Oh, stop showing off," and saw John, in response, break the cigarette in two and put the halves entirely in his mouth and chew, sticking out his tongue to display the shreds to his sister.

Joan talked to him, reasoning—a fountain of reason, unintelligible. "Talked about it for years . . . our children must help us . . . Daddy and I both want . . ." As the boy listened, he carefully wadded a paper napkin into the leaves of his salad, fashioned a ball of paper and lettuce, and popped it into his mouth, looking around the table of expected laughter. None came. Judith said, "Be mature," and dismissed a plume of smoke.

Richard got up from this stifling table and let the boy outside. Though the house was in twilight, the outdoors still brimmed with light, the lovely waste light of high summer. Both laughing, he supervised John’s spitting out the lettuce and paper and tobacco into the pachysandra. He took him by the hand—a square gritty hand, but for it’s softness a man’s. Yet, it held on. They ran together up in to the field, past the tennis court. The raw banking left by the bulldozers was dotted with daisies. Past the court and a flat stretch where they used to play family baseball stood a soft green rise glorious in the sun, each weed and species of grass distinct as illumination on parchment. "I’m sorry, so sorry;"
Richard cried. “You were the only one who ever tried to help me with all the goddam jobs around this place.”

Sobbing, safe within his tears and champagne, John explained, “It’s not just the separation, it’s the whole crummy year, I hate that school, you can’t make any friends, the history teacher’s a scud.”

They sat on the crest of the rise, shaking and warm from their tears but easier in their voices, and Richard tried to focus on the child’s sad year—the weekdays long with homework, the weekends spent in his room with model airplanes, while his parents murmured down below, nursing their separation. How selfish, how blind, Richard thought; his eyes felt scoured. He told his son, “We’ll think about getting you transferred. Life’s too short to be miserable.”

They had said what they could, but did not want the moment to heal, and talked on, about the school, about the tennis court, whether it would ever again be good as it had been that first summer. They walked to inspect it and pressed a few more tapes more firmly down. A little stiltedly, perhaps trying now to make too much of the moment, Richard led the boy to the spot in the field where the view was best, of the metallic blue river, the emerald marsh, the scattered islands velvety with shadows in the low light, the white bits of beach far away. “See,” he said. “It goes on being beautiful. It’ll be here tomorrow.”

“I know,” John answered, impatiently. The moment had closed.

Back in the house, the others had opened some white wine, the champagne being drunk, and still sat at the table, the three females, gossiping. Where Joan sat had become the head. She turned, showing him a tearless face, and asked, “All right?”

“We’re fine,” he said, resenting it, though relieved, that the party went on without him.

In bed she explained, “I couldn’t cry I guess because I cried so much all spring. It really wasn’t fair. It’s your idea, and you made it look as though I was kicking you out.”

“I’m sorry,” he said. “I couldn’t stop it. I wanted to but I couldn’t.”

“You didn’t want to. You loved it. You were having your way, making a general announcement.”

“I love having it over,” he admitted. “god, those kids were great. So brave and funny.” John, returned to the house, had settled to a model airplane in his room, and kept shouting down to them, “I’m O.K. No sweat.” “And the way,” Richard went on, cozy in his relief, “they never questioned the reason we gave. No thought of a third person. Not even Judith.”

“That was touching,” Joan said.

He gave her a hug. “You were great too. Very reassuring to everybody. Thank you.” Guiltily, he realized he did not feel separated.

“You still have Dickie to do,” she told him. These words set before him a black mountain in the darkness; it’s cold breath, its near weight affected his chest. Of the four children, his elder son was most nearly his conscious. Joan did not need to add, “That’s one piece of your dirty work I won’t do for you.”

“I know. I’ll do it. You go to sleep.”

Within minutes, her breathing slowed, become oblivious and deep. It was quarter to midnight. Dickie’s train from the concert would come in at one-fourteen. Richard set the alarm for one. He had slept atrociously for weeks. But whenever he closed his lids some glimpse of the last hours scorched them—Judith exhaling toward the ceiling in a kind of aversion, Bean’s mute staring, the sun struck growth in the field where he and John had rested. The mountain before him moved closer, moved within him; he was huge, momentous. The ache at the back of his throat felt stale. His wife slept as if slain beside him. When, exasperated by his hot lids, his crowded heart, he rose from bed and dressed, she awoke enough to turn over. He told her, then, “Joan, if I could undo it all, I would.”

“Where would you begin?” she asked. There was no place. Giving him courage, she was always giving him courage. He put on shoes without socks in the dark. The children were breathing in their rooms, the downstairs was hollow. In their confusion they had left lights burning. He turned off all but one, the kitchen overhead. The car started. He had hoped it wouldn’t. He met only the moonlight on the road; it seemed a diaphanous companion, flickering in the leaves along the roadside, haunting his rearview mirror like a pursuer, melting under his headlights. The center of town, not quite
A young cop in uniform kept company with a gang of T-shirted kids on the steps of the bank. Across from the railroad station, several bars kept open. Customers, mostly young, passed in and out of the warm night, savoring summer’s novelty. Voices shouted from cars as they passed; an immense conversation seemed in progress. Richard parked and in his weariness put his head on the passenger seat, out of the commotion and wheeling lights. It was as when, in the movies, an assassin grimly carries his mission through the jostle of a carnival—except the movies cannot show the precipitous, palpable slope you cling to within. You cannot climb back down; you can only fall. The synthetic fabric of the car seat, warmed by his cheek, confided to him an ancient, distant scent of vanilla.

A train whistle caused him to lift his head. It was on time; he had hoped it would be late. The slender drawgates descended. The bell of approached tingled happily. The great metal body, horizontally fluted, rocked to a stop, and sleepy teen-agers disembarked, his son among them. Dickie did not show surprise that his father was meeting him at this terrible hour. He sauntered to the car with two friends, both taller than he. He said “Hi” to his father and took the passenger’s seat with an exhausted promptness that expressed gratitude. The friends got in the back, and Richard was grateful; a few more minutes’ postponement would be won by driving them home.

He asked, "How was the concert?"

“Groovy,” one boy said from the back seat.

“It bit,” the other said.

“It was O.K.,” Dickie said, moderate by nature, so reasonable that in his childhood the unreason of the world had given him headaches, stomach aches, nausea. When the second friend had been dropped off at his dark house, the boy blurted, “Dad, my eyes are killing me with hay fever! I’m out there cutting that mothering grass all day!”

“Do we still have those drops?”

“They didn’t do any good last summer.”

“They might this.” Richard swung a U-turn on the empty street. The drive home took a few minutes. The mountain was here, in his throat. “Richard,” he said, and felt the boy, slumped and rubbing his eyes, go tense at his tone, “I didn’t come to meet you just to make your life easier. I came because your mother and I have some news for you, and your hard man to get ahold of these days. It’s sad news.”

“That’s O.K.” The reassurance came out soft, but quick, as if released from the tip of a spring.

Richard had feared that his tears would returned and choke him, but the boy’s manliness set an example, and his voiced issued forth steady and dry. “It’s sad news, but it needn’t be tragic news, at least for you. It should have no practical effect on your life, though it’s bound to have an emotional effect. You’ll work at your job, and go back to school in September. Your mother and I are really proud of what you’re making of your life; we don’t want that to change at all.”

“Yeah,” the boy said lightly, on the intake of his breath, holding himself up. They turned the corner; the church they went loomed like a gutted fort. The home of the woman Richard hoped to marry stood across the green. Her bedroom light burned.

“Your mother and I,” he said, “have decided to separate. For the summer. Nothing legal, no divorce yet. We want to see how it feels. For some years now, we haven’t been doing enough for each other, making each other as happy as we should be. Have you sensed that?”

“No,” the boy said. It was an honest, unemotional answer: true or false in a quiz.

Glad for the factual basis, Richard pursued even garrulously, the details. His apartment acr gloss town, his utter accessibility, the split vacation arrangements, the advantages to the children, the added mobility and variety of the summer. Dickie listened, absorbing. “Do the others know?”

“Yes.”

“How did they take it?”

“the girls pretty calmly. John flipped out; he shouted and ate a cigarette and made a salad out of his napkin and told us how much he hated school.”

His brother chuckled. “He did?”

“Yeah. The school issue was more upsetting for him than Mom and me. He seemed to feel better for having exploded.”

“He did?” the repetition was the first sign that he was stunned.
“Yes. Dickie, I want to tell you something. This last hour, waiting for your train to get in, has been about the worst of my life. I hate this. 

Hate it. My father would have died before doing it to me.”

He felt immensely lighter, saying this. He had dumped the mountain on the boy. They were home. Moving swiftly as a shadow, Dickie was out of the car, through the bright kitchen. Richard called after him, “Want a glass of milk or anything?”

“No, thanks.”

“Want us to call the course tomorrow and say you’re too sick to work?”

“No, that’s alright.” The answer was faint, delivered at the door to his room; Richard listened for the slam that went with a tantrum. The door closed normally, gently. The sound was sickening.

Joan had sunk into that first deep trough of sleep and was slow to awake. Richard had to repeat, “I told him.”

“What did he say?”

“Nothing much. Could you go say goodnight to him? Please.”

She left their room, without putting on a bathrobe. He sluggishly changed back into his pajamas and walked down the hall. Dickie was already in bed, Joan was sitting beside him, and the boy’s bedside clock radio was murmuring music. When she stood, an inexplicable light—the moon?—outlined her body through the nightie. Richard sat on the warm place she had intended on the child’s narrow mattress. He asked him, “Do you want the radio on like that?”

“It always is.”

“Doesn’t it keep you awake? It would me.”

“No.”

“Are you sleepy?”

“Yeah.”

“Good. Sure you want to get up and go to work? You’ve had a big night.”

“I want to.”

Away at school this winter he had learned for the first time that you can go short of sleep and live. As an infant he had slept with an immobile, sweating intensity that had alarmed his babysitters. In adolescence he had often been the first of the four children to go to bed. Even now, he would go slack in the middle of a television show, his sprawled legs hairy and brown. “O.K. Good boy. Dickie, listen. I love you so much, I never knew how much until now. No matter how this work out, I’ll always be with you. Really.”

Richard bent to kiss an averted face but his son, sinewy, turned an with wet cheeks embraced him and give him a kiss, on the lips, passionate as a woman’s. In his father’s ear he moaned one word, the crucial, intelligent word: “Why?”

Why. It was a whistle of wind in a crack, a knife thrust, a window thrown open on emptiness. He white face was gone, the darkness was featureless. Richard had forgotten why.
FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Mary Flannery O'Connor (March 25 1925 – August 3 1964) was an American novelist, short-story writer and essayist.

Flannery O'Connor was the only child of Edward F. O'Connor and Regina Cline O'Connor. Her father was diagnosed with lupus in 1937; he died on February 1, 1941 when Flannery was 15. The disease was hereditary in the O'Connor family and Flannery O'Connor was devastated by the loss of her father.\(^1\)

O'Connor described herself as a "pigeon-toed child with a receding chin and a you-leave-me-alone-or-I'll-bite-you complex." When O'Connor was six she taught a chicken to walk backwards, and it was this that led to her first experience of being a celebrity. The Pathé News people filmed "Little Mary O'Connor" with her trained chicken, and showed the film around the country. She said, "When I was six I had a chicken that walked backward and was in the Pathe News. I was in it too with the chicken. I was just there to assist the chicken but it was the high point in my life. Everything since has been anticlimax."\(^2\)

O'Connor attended the Peabody Laboratory School, from which she graduated in 1942. She entered Georgia State College for Women (now Georgia College & State University), in an accelerated three-year program, and graduated in June 1945 with a Social Sciences degree. She almost didn't graduate. In 1946 she was accepted into the prestigious Iowa Writers' Workshop.

In 1949 O'Connor met and eventually accepted an invitation to stay with Robert Fitzgerald (translator of Greek plays and epic poems, including Oedipus Rex and both the Odyssey and the Iliad, and also a respected poet in his own right) and his wife, Sally, in Redding, Connecticut.\(^3\)

In 1951 she was diagnosed with disseminated lupus, and subsequently returned to her ancestral farm, Andalusia, in Milledgeville, Georgia. She was expected to live only five more years; she lived nearly 15. At Andalusia, she raised and nurtured some 100 peafowl. Fascinated by birds of all kinds, she raised ducks, hens, geese, and any sort of exotic bird she could obtain, while incorporating images of peacocks into her books. She describes her peacocks in an essay entitled "The
King of Birds.” Despite her sheltered life, her writing reveals an uncanny grasp of the nuances of human behavior. She was a devout Catholic living in the “Bible Belt,” the Protestant South. She collected books on Catholic theology and at times gave lectures on faith and literature, traveling quite far despite her frail health. Her bed-time reading was none other than the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas. She also maintained a wide correspondence, including such famous writers as Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop. She never married, relying for companionship on her correspondence and on her close relationship with her mother, Regina Cline O’Connor.

O’Connor completed more than two dozen short stories and two novels while battling lupus. She died on August 3, 1964, at the age of 39, of complications from lupus at Baldwin County Hospital and was buried in Milledgeville, Georgia, at Memory Hill Cemetery. Her mother died in 1997.

An important voice in American literature, O’Connor wrote two novels and 32 short stories, as well as a number of reviews and commentaries. She was a Southern writer who often wrote in a Southern Gothic style and relied heavily on regional settings and -- it is regularly said -- grotesque characters. But she remarked, "anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic." Her texts usually take place in the South and revolve around morally flawed characters, while the issue of race often appears in the background. One of her trademarks is blunt foreshadowing, giving a reader an idea of what will happen far before it happens. Most of her works feature disturbing elements, though she did not like to be characterized as cynical. “I am tired of reading reviews that call A Good Man brutal and sarcastic,” she writes. "The stories are hard but they are hard because there is nothing harder or less sentimental than Christian realism... when I see these stories described as horror stories I am always amused because the reviewer always has hold of the wrong horror.”

Her two novels were Wise Blood (1952) and The Violent Bear It Away (1960). She also published two books of short stories: A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories (1955) and Everything That Rises Must Converge (published posthumously in 1965).

She felt deeply informed by the sacramental, and by the Thomist notion that the created world is charged with God. Yet she would not write apologetic fiction of the kind prevalent in the Catholic literature of the time, explaining that a writer's meaning must be evident in his or her fiction without didacticism. She wrote ironic, subtly allegorical fiction about deceptively backward Southern characters, usually fundamentalist Protestants, who undergo transformations of character that to O’Connor’s thinking brought them closer to the Catholic mind. The transformation is often accomplished through pain, violence, and ludicrous behavior in the pursuit of the holy. However grotesque the setting, she tried to portray her characters as they might be touched by divine grace. This ruled out a sentimental understanding of the stories’ violence, as of her own illness. O’Connor wrote: "Grace changes us and change is painful." She also had a deeply sardonic sense of humor, often based in the disparity between her characters' limited perceptions and the awesome fate awaiting them. Another source of humor is frequently found in the attempt of well-meaning liberals to cope with the rural South on their own terms. O’Connor uses such characters' inability to come to terms with race, poverty, and fundamentalism, other than in sentimental illusions, as an example of the failure of the secular world in the twentieth century.

However, several stories reveal that O’Connor was familiar with some of the most sensitive contemporary issues that her liberal and fundamentalist characters might encounter. She addressed the Holocaust in her famous story "The Displaced Person," and racial integration in "Everything that Rises Must Converge." O’Connor’s fiction often included references to the problem of race in the South; occasionally, racial issues come to the forefront, as in “The Artificial Nigger,” “Everything that Rises Must Converge,” and "Judgment Day," her last short story and a drastically rewritten version of her first published story, "The Geranium.” Fragments exist of an unfinished novel tentatively titled Why
Do the Heathen Rage? that draws from several of her short stories, including "Why Do the Heathen Rage?", "The Enduring Chill," and "The Partridge Festival."

Her best friend, Betty Hester, received a weekly letter from O'Connor for more than a decade. These letters provided the bulk of the correspondence collected in The Habit of Being, a selection of O'Connor's letters edited by Sally Fitzgerald. The reclusive Hester was given the pseudonym "A.," and her identity was not known until after she killed herself in 1998. Much of O'Connor's best-known writing on religion, writing, and the South is contained in these and other letters. The complete collection of the unedited letters between the two was unveiled by Emory University on May 12, 2007; the letters were given to the university in 1987 with the stipulation that they not be released to the public for 20 years.[6] Betty Hester was a lesbian, and Emory's Steve Enniss speculates that she probably kept the letters from public scrutiny for that reason.[7] The unsealed letters include unflattering remarks about O'Connor's friend William Sessions and the work of other Southern writers.

The Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction, named in honor of O'Connor by the University of Georgia Press, is a prize given annually to an outstanding collection of short stories.

JOHN UPDIKE’S BIOGRAPHY

John Updike was born on March 18, 1932, in Reading, Pennsylvania, and spent his first years in nearby Shillington, a small town where his father was a high school science teacher. The area surrounding Reading has provided the setting for many of his stories, with the invented towns of Brewer and Olinger standing in for Reading and Shillington. An only child, Updike and his parents shared a house with his grandparents for much of his childhood. When he was 13, the family moved to his mother's birthplace, a stone farmhouse on an 80-acre farm near Plowville, eleven miles from Shillington, where he continued to attend school.

At home, he consumed popular fiction, especially humor and mysteries. His mother, herself an aspiring writer, encouraged him to write and draw. He excelled in school and served as President and co-aledictorian of his graduating class at Shillington High School. For the first three summers after high school, he worked as a copy boy at the Reading Eagle newspaper, eventually producing a number of feature stories for the paper. He received a tuition scholarship to Harvard University, where he majored in English. As an undergraduate, he wrote stories and drew cartoons for the Harvard
Lampoon humor magazine, serving as the magazine's president in his senior year. Before graduating, he married fellow student Mary E. Pennington. He graduated summa cum laude from Harvard in 1954, and in that same year sold a poem and a short story to The New Yorker magazine.

Updike and his wife spent the following year in England, where Updike studied at Oxford's Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. While they were in England, their first daughter was born and Updike met the American writers E. B. and Katharine White, editors at The New Yorker, who urged him to seek a job at the magazine. On returning from England, the Updikes settled in Manhattan, where John took a position as a staff writer at The New Yorker. He worked at the magazine for nearly two years, writing editorials, features and reviews, but after the birth of a son in 1957, he decided to move his growing family to the small town of Ipswich, Massachusetts. He continued to contribute to The New Yorker but resolved to support his family by writing full-time, without taking a salaried position. He maintained a lifelong relationship with The New Yorker, where many of his poems, reviews and short stories appeared, but he resided in Massachusetts for the rest of his life.

Updike's first book of poetry, The Carpentered Hen and Other Tame Creatures, was published by Harper and Brothers in 1958. When the publisher sought changes to the ending of his first novel, The Poorhouse Fair, he moved to Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. The first novel was well-received, and with support from the Guggenheim Fellowship, Updike undertook a more ambitious novel, Rabbit, Run. The novel introduced one of Updike's most memorable characters, the small-town athlete, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom. Knopf feared that his frank description of Rabbit's sexual adventures could lead to prosecution for obscenity, and made a number of changes to the text. The book was published to widespread acclaim without legal repercussions. The original text was restored for the British edition a few years later, and subsequent American editions of the book have reflected the author's original intent. Updike's reputation as a leading author of his generation was established.

After the birth of a third child, Updike rented a one-room office above a restaurant in Ipswich, where he wrote for several hours every morning, six days a week, a schedule he adhered to throughout his career. In 1963, he received the National Book Award for his novel The Centaur, inspired by his childhood in Pennsylvania. The following year, at age 32, he became the youngest person ever elected...
to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and was invited by the State Department to tour eastern Europe as part of a cultural exchange program between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1967, he joined the author Robert Penn Warren and other American writers in signing a letter urging Soviet writers to defend Jewish cultural institutions under attack by the Soviet government.

In 1968, Updike's novel *Couples* created a national sensation with its portrayal of the complicated relationships among a set of young married couples in the suburbs. It remained on the best-seller lists for over a year and prompted a *Time* magazine cover story featuring Updike. In *Bech: A Book* (1970), Updike introduced a new protagonist, the imaginary novelist Henry Bech, who, like Rabbit Angstrom, was destined to reappear in Updike's fiction for many years. Rabbit Angstrom reappeared in *Rabbit Redux* (1971).

In the 1970s, Updike continued to travel as a cultural ambassador of the United States, and in 1974 he joined authors John Cheever, Arthur Miller and Richard Wilbur in calling on the Soviet government to cease its persecution of dissident author Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Updike separated from his wife Mary in 1974 and moved to Boston where he taught briefly at Boston University. Two years later, the Updikes were divorced, and in 1977 he married Martha Ruggles Bernhard, settling with her and her three children in Georgetown, Massachusetts.

*Rabbit is Rich*, published in 1981, received numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In 1983 Updike's other alter ego, Harry Bech, reappeared in *Bech is Back*, and Updike was featured in a second *Time* magazine cover story, "Going Great at 50." Among his novels of the 1980s and 1990s are a trilogy retelling *The Scarlet Letter* from the points of view of three different characters, and a prequel to *Hamlet*, entitled *Gertrude and Claudius*. In 1991 he received a second Pulitzer Prize for *Rabbit at Rest*. He was only the third American to win a second Pulitzer Prize in the fiction category.

In an autobiographical essay, Updike famously identified sex, art, and religion as "the three great secret things" in human experience. The grandson of a Presbyterian minister (his first father-in-law was also a minister), his writing in all genres has displayed a preoccupation with philosophical questions. A lifelong churchgoer and student of Christian theology, the Jesuit magazine *America*
awarded him its Campion Award in 1997 as a "distinguished Christian person of letters." He received the National Medal of Art from President George H.W. Bush in 1989, and in 2003 was presented with the National Medal for the Humanities from President George W. Bush. He was one of a very few Americans to receive both of these honors. The same year saw the publication of a comprehensive collection, *The Early Stories, 1953-1975*.

John Updike spent his last years in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, in the same corner of New England where so much of his fiction is set. His last book was *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008), a sequel to his 1984 novel *The Witches of Eastwick*. Updike succumbed to lung cancer the following year at the age of 76.