



## Awakening the Moral Imagination through Fairy Tales and Stories with Dr. Vigen Guroian

Seminar 4 with Becky  
Monticchio, Noah  
Perrin, and Oleathia  
McKethan

### Outline:

#### A Good Man is Hard to Find

- This is Flannery O' Connor's signature story.
- There is comedy, violence, it has theological concerns, and it has an element of the grotesque.
- We live in the midst of death though we think we can outpace it. Our lives are vulnerable to forces outside of our control.
- The misfit is a kind of underground man. He is a criminal, but without the usual motives. He becomes a murderer in her story.
- Jesus is an example of where the balance does not exist, and yet the man is killed. He in some sense relates himself to Jesus because he is not sure that there is a balance in his punishment.
- He can't settle into a conviction that justice has been served in his case.
- Three parts of the story:
  - A visit with a 1950s family
  - The second part of the story is very rich in the images and details of the 1950s.
  - The third part of the story is when they've left and they're on the road and they get lost and there is an accident. The misfit and his crew of two, who have been following them, kill the entire family.
- There is foreshadowing in the early part of the story as to what is going to happen in the future.
- There is comedy that verges on satire. A satirical look at middle class life.
- John Wesley and June Star, the names of the children, represents the dichotomy of religion and celebrity.
- The grandmother is convinced that there is religion in the misfit. She tries to use religious words to save herself. Goodness for her is conventionality.
- The adults put up with the grandmother more than the children do.
- The farthest thoughts from their minds in the beginning of the story is the kind of incident that occurs at the end of the story. Beneath the surface, something can erupt and even take your life. They fall off of the world they live in, into hell.



- The family dynamics are familiar to us. The world they are living in is in detail for us.
- Underneath the surface there is evil, you can mask it and divert your attention, but it is there. We had just come out of a world war.
- The entire story is symbolic, it is a parable of the 1950s, for the 1950s, and for us.
- What is it about Jesus' arrest and execution that makes the whole thing off balance, and it doesn't fit. Jesus was innocent, but he took the crime upon himself.
- His (the misfit's) complaint with regard to Jesus is that he wasn't there, he couldn't see him with his own eyes, touch him with his own hands, hear him with his own ears (like Thomas).
- In facing her mortality, she acted out the gospel (and only them).
- His description of the sky and his imprisonment:
  - His imprisonment he describes as a tomb (walls all around him).
  - "I was buried alive."
  - He revels in his own autonomy and freedom to most anything he wants without reason, except in his own case he wants a reason.
  - The misfit is smart, which is part of what is so scary about them. That is his shield.