“A Good Man is Hard to Find” Questions for Analysis

Directions: Answer the following questions in well-developed sentences. Be sure to include textual evidence and analysis in your responses.

1. What is the significance of the grandmother bringing up the Misfit at the beginning of the story?

2. Describe the mother. Analyze why O’Connor makes her such a nonentity in the text.

3. O’Connor characterizes the children as being obnoxious. What is the significance of this choice? Would the result of the story be different if she characterized them in another way?

4. Describe the atmosphere at Red Sammy’s. What is the significance of the conversation between the grandmother and Red Sammy?

5. Consider the causes of the accident. Is it totally accidental or can it be attributed to bad choices as well?

6. Describe the Misfit’s experience of the world. To what extent can his criminality be attributed to the conditions of his life? Even though he is not in jail, is he a free man?

7. Analyze the Misfit’s statement: “She would have been a good woman…if it had been somebody there to shoot her everyday of her life.”

8. In an essay about her story, O’Connor states: “I don’t want to equate the Misfit with the devil. I prefer to think that however unlikely this may seem, the old lady’s gesture…will be enough of a pain to him there to turn him into the prophet he was meant to become.” Analyze what O’Connor means by this. How does this comment effect the reader’s understanding of the text?