

Flannery O'Connor ("A Good Man Is Hard to Find") **Background**

March 25, 1925 - August 3, 1964. From Georgia. The American South features prominently in her work. Although she wrote novels, she is best known for her short stories. She was a master at the form. Raised Roman Catholic, she frequently focuses on ideas of faith, redemption, and grace. Known for her ability to portray common speech, keen eye for religion and use of the absurd and violence.

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" was published in collection in 1955 and is among her best known works. She loved peacocks and raised them on her mother's farm.

"I find that most people know what a story is until they sit down to write one." - *The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor*

- Theme: a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work. May be stated directly or indirectly.
- Symbol: a word, place, character, or object that means something beyond what it is on a literal level. Can be ambiguous or have more than one meaning (cf allegory)
- Southern Gothic: derived from gothic literature (works designed to thrill through mystery, villainy, murder and the supernatural). Stories set in the South and characterized by grotesque, macabre, or fantastic incidents.
- Dramatic Irony: When the reader knows something about the circumstances that the character does not, and recognizes the characters actions as inappropriate/opposite.