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Sample Reader Response

(**ATTN**) “Being a woman is a terribly difficult task, since it consists principally in dealing with men.” (Conrad) (**BKG 1**) Historically, to be a woman has been difficult. Women have been fighting for equality since the beginning of time. The reason that women have had to fight so hard for equality has been an ignorant belief of men throughout history that somehow women are inferior. This has made it difficult for women to achieve equality in all walks of life. (**BKG 2**) Women have been manipulated and used as pawns by men throughout history. In the film *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock explores this concept. He presents the viewer with a protagonist, Scotty, who falls in love with a woman named Judy. The audience finds out about halfway through the film that Judy is involved with another man named Gavin Elster in a plot to murder Elster’s wife. Hitchcock reveals this information to the audience before Scotty to create suspense. But he also reveals this information to make Judy a problematic character. (**BKG 3**) Judy is aware that she has been manipulated by Elster as she did not know that he was going to kill his wife. But now that she knows, what should she do? Judy is a character that some people in the audience feel sorry for. This viewer believes that Judy is a victim of a time when men held all the power and use women. Others believe that she is an accomplice to murder who gets what she deserves in the end of the film. (**THESIS**) Even though Judy was clearly manipulated by Gavin Elster during a time when women had little power, Judy gets what she deserves.

The introduction does what a typical intro does.

Starts with an attention getter.

Has background info.

Then has a thesis that makes your claim clear while alluding to the counter.

BKG 1 - starts broad. Notice how I discuss the role of women in general.

BKG 2 - Gives a brief summary of the story

BKG 3 - Introduces the problem

(TS) Though young, impressionable, and new to the city, Judy Barton was still clearly able to follow her own moral compass telling her that participating in a pre-meditated murder was not only legally reprehensible, but villainous. She gets what she deserves. (CD). Judy makes a conscious choice throughout the film to play the part of Madaline Elster. She goes to all of the places that Gavin tells her to go to so Scotty can follow her and then investigate the background of Carlotta Valdes. She also throws herself into the bay so Scotty can “save” her. (COM 1) Undergoing the facade and taking on the false identity of Madeline was a choice made by Barton again and again as she carried on in her masquerade of lies. In the film, it is revealed that Judy was coached by Elster on how to assume the identity of his wife. At the time, it is likely that Judy struck up an affair with Elster in her quest for love, however, sudden and deep emotional involvement is not an excuse for a sane human to be convinced into aiding an execution. (COM 2) Judy gets what she deserves in the end. She dies at the scene of the original crime that she helped to perpetuate. Judy knew halfway through the film that she had been taken advantage of and was a pawn in Elster’s plan to murder his wife, but she does nothing about it. She decides to try to “have her cake and eat it too.” She hopes that she can make Scotty love her for who she is with the knowledge that she is an accomplice to murder. (COM 3) Within that time frame--no matter the length--Judy was aware what she was committing to. A loose hold on who one chooses to be is not an excuse acceptable for murder. Judy could have done the right thing many times in the film but she was greedy. In this world you have a choice to do what is right, or what is right for you. Judy chose to pursue what was right for her instead of what was morally right. She paid the price for compromising her own morality. (PT) Some may argue that Judy Barton was manipulated. This viewer would argue that as a woman in the 1950’s Judy has very little power. (CD) On the day that Gavin Elster plans to murder his wife, Judy

Notice how the TS has the counter, my claim, and the reason for my claim

COM 1 – I am just summarizing things that happen in the story

COM 2 – Reconnecting to my claim

COM 3 – Inserting my voice into the conversation.

PT – Transition to the counter-argument discussion.

CD –
Specific
example
that
supports
the
counter

COM 1 -
Just
summariz
ing
events
from the
story

ran up the bell tower in an attempt to save Madeline. When she gets to the top of the tower, she witnesses Gavin throw his wife's lifeless body off of the tower to her death. Just is then grabbed by Elster and he covers her mouth as he drags her into the shadows. **(COM 1)** Clearly at this point in the film Judy is trying to do the right thing. She realizes what Elster is doing and she tries to stop him from killing his wife. **(COM 2)** Judy is a controversial figure. She knew that she was involved in a plot, but a plot to do what? Hitchcock leaves it unclear as to how much she really knew during the time that she was impersonating Madeline Elster. Gavin Elster used her as a pawn in a game that she did not know the rules to. To say that Judy deserved to die is to say that all women who have been objectified and deceived by the men in their lives deserved to be punished for being a victim of circumstance. The viewer should feel sorry for Judy. They should not cheer on her death. **(COM 3) The unsuccessful effort to save the life of Madeline does make it seem as if Judy has somehow awakened to her wrongdoings. However; she could have gone to the police at any time. But this may have put her in jeopardy. She may have gone to jail. If she were remorseful, she would not have accepted the money or necklace from Elster for the completion of the task. The fact that she continued to wear the necklace despite its origins points to the shallow notion of death believed by Judy. If she truly felt regret for what she did to Madeline and for helping Elster get away with what he did, she would have refused the rewards of her kill. Ultimately karma catches up with Judy. Instead of doing what is right, she tried to do what was right for her and she paid for it with her life.**

COM 2 – This is where I give a FAIR discussion of the counter-argument

COM 3 – This is where I write a rebuttal of the counter-argument

(RVT) Judy is a victim of no one but herself. She allowed herself to be stolen into the idea of love rooted in evil and signed her soul away when she agreed to help a murderer. **(SUM)** In the months after pulling off the scheme, her identity was a shell that was so flimsy, it was torn

The conclusion does what it is supposed to do. See my packet.

down by Scottie's obsessive efforts to change the superficial. Judy Barton had every opportunity to act on the role she played, but she chose not to. **(REL)** Historically women have been objectified. Women have been forced into a subjective position in society. However; throughout history, women have fought this role in society. Women have done what is right in the face of perceived powerlessness. They have fought for what was right even if it meant trouble, hardship, and even death for themselves. **(CS)** It is only fitting that this woman--as troubled as she was--experience the brutally ironic consequences of her actions, even if those consequences were her death