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Dorgan's English 1302 Assignments

for

April 27 – May 1, 2020

1. Read the play "A Jury of Her Peers" (<http://nmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1345.pdf>). Focus on motive and evidence against Minnie Foster.

2. Answer the questions based on the reading of the play.

3. Write a persuasive opening or closing argument either persuading a jury that Minnie Foster should be found guilty of cold-blooded murder, or that mitigating circumstances should be considered in the killing of her husband. You choose which stand to take. Remember the importance of rhetorical appeals when presenting an argument (Ethos, Pathos, Logos). Refer to the PowerPoint notes for additional information on presenting an argument. Be sure to include specific quotes from the story in your argument.

Criteria - 2 typed pages (not including the works cited) in which you address at least three clues in your argument using ethos, pathos, and logos.

"A Jury of Her Peers" questions

1. When Susan Glaspell wrote this short story, in 1916, women were not only barred from jury service, they could not even vote for public officials. Why, then, do you think she chose this title for her story? What do you think it means?

2. What significance do you see in the women & men's names?

3. What symbols do you think are key to this story?

4. The story subtly describes a transformation in the attitudes of Martha Hale and Mrs. Peters. What was this transformation? What gave rise to this change?

5. By piecing together clues in the kitchen, the two women learned something significant about Mrs. Wright/Minnie Foster and who she really was as a person. Why would "just kitchen things" be silent to men, and yet provide clues to the women in the story?

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6. What did the women learn about Minnie Foster/Mrs. Wright? What did they learn about themselves, and about women and men in relation to one another?
7. Could you say the two women had a sort of “enlightenment” experience? How so or how not?
8. How did the women act on the basis of their knowledge/experience?
9. Do you think their actions were legal or illegal?
10. Would you say their actions were just or unjust? What are your criteria for deciding these questions (questions 9 & 10)?
11. What does this story teach about good and evil in the world?
12. What do you think is the primary message of this story?
13. What sort of relationship forms between Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in “A Jury of Her Peers”?
14. What impact does the never-glimpsed Mrs. Wright have on this relationship?
15. Explain the use of narrative structure in “A Jury of Her Peers” focusing particularly on the notion of “resolution”. How does the plot resolve itself?
16. How does this resolution differ from the expected outcome of the story expressed by the townsmen looking for evidence of the crime?
17. The question of ethics arises in “A Jury of Her Peers” in regards to the way the men and the women approach the crime. Compare the approach of the townsmen to Minnie Wright to that of the townswomen who accompany the men on their search for evidence of the crime.
18. What drives the women to make the choice they make?
19. Minnie Wright never appears in the story “A Jury of Her Peers” but we learn much about her motives and traits from the other characters. What are the motives that possibly compelled Minnie Wright to kill her husband?
20. How do we come to know the motives during the course of the story?
21. What causes the men to overlook the evidence found by the women in the story “A Jury of Her Peers”? Why would Glaspell set up the story in this way? In other words, what is her point for having the men fail in their task where the women succeed?

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22. Although “A Jury of Her Peers” was written almost one hundred years ago, it possesses contemporary attitudes about women that has led many people to refer to it as a feminist or pro-woman story. What elements or occurrences in the story would produce this response in a reader?

23. Choose 5 phrases that you think are particularly effective. For each, explain why you think they are effective and why you think the author chose these specific words and descriptions.

24. Setting includes the mood, time, place, and social conditions of the story. Describe the setting of “A Jury of Her Peers” including all aspects of setting. Include at least five important, specific quotes / details, explaining how they contribute to the atmosphere and plot of the story.

25. Who is the protagonist in the story? Explain.

26. What indirect characterization is there about Minnie Foster before she was married? (2 examples)

27. What indirect characterization is there about Minnie Wright after she was married? (2 examples)

28. Consider the point of view used in the story. Why does the author of “A Jury of Her Peers” write the story in the third person limited omniscient point of view? Explain.

29. What is the inner conflict that Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale struggle with as they uncover clues and make connections? Explain their struggle -- how and why do they “understand” Minnie and what she went through?

30. Who or what are Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters in conflict with? Explain with examples.

31. What clues did the author include to suggest why Minnie did what she did?

32. What is going to happen to Minnie Wright? The story does not let the reader know if Mrs. Wright is found guilty or not, but what clues are given during the conclusion to help us take a good guess?

33. What do you think the climax of the story is? Support your answer.

Artistic unity means that the author hasn’t included any details that are irrelevant. All of them contribute to the total meaning of the story. Describe the following symbols or details and explain why they are important to the story’s meaning or development: Include quotes to support your answers.

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34. Incomplete work
35. Party telephone
36. Specific name choices: "John Wright", "Minnie Foster"
37. Quilt
38. Bird/Bird cage
39. The stove
40. The rocking chair
41. List three of the subjects talked about or dealt with in the story.
42. Explain this quote by Mr. Hale, ""But would the women know a clue if they did come upon it?"
43. What is the climax of "A Jury of Her Peers"?
44. Several items speak for Minnie Foster, even though she is not there to defend herself. What are they and how do they defend her?
45. Give an example of irony in the story and explain its meaning.
46. What does the canary symbolize in the story? Explain.
47. "A Jury of Her Peers" and the accompanying short story "Trifles" is based on true events. The stories are among the most frequently read stories in education (even law schools). Why, in your opinion, is this story taught so frequently?
48. What in Susan Glaspell's background encouraged her to write "A Jury of Her Peers"?
49. What does "A Jury of Her Peers" say about women's roles in the early nineteen hundreds?
50. Draw and label the plot structure. Give examples for each step.