

The judges wife

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



Steve Watson Professor Ridout English 1102 20 March 2012 Society's monster In "The Judge's Wife" the author, Isabel Allende, creates a piece readers can understand to the point of empathy. Because her short story examines human behavior in respect to passions, justice, and emotion (love) in a manner that one can become fully immersed in the plot. The author makes use of imagery to embellish not only upon her environment, but also her characters. Allende presents the ideas of corruption, innocence, and strictness simply through words that capture the descriptions of her characters. The strait laced judge being "...dressed formally in black ... and his boots always shone with bees wax. " The author uses a variety of techniques to make full use of the limited space within her short story by using strong imagery, characterization, and theme. The author uses images of deformity show the corruption of her main character, Nicholas Vidal; by stating " His face was scarred from knife fights before he reached his teens. " Along with being born with four nipples and his " doleful expression" the reader gains a visual representation of Vidal's tragic formation. Using such imagery the author allows the readers to form a solid conception of the harsh life of her character. Beyond merely presenting imagery to enhance the characters, Allende also supplies background information in order to enhance the readers understanding of how the main character arrived at his current state. The author focuses on the main character's fatherless and loveless conception in order to accentuate how his development occurred. He feels ultimately rejected by a society that attempts to destroy him. Allende uses this particular method of rejection to temper the soul of Vidal to the hardness of iron. Further extending upon the casting of Nicholas as a

monster, a clear out casting from society also aids in his murderous temperament. This also shows how Nicholas is assumed early on in his life by "decent folk" to become a criminal due to the telling marks on his face. It may well be said that though the Judge, in his strait laced figure, may not have directly created Nicholas, yet in reality he probably did in deed, like the rest of society, stereotyped and eventually outcast Nicholas based solely upon the scars on his face. In her story the author makes use of society's tendency to categorize and reject an individual based solely on their exterior shells, rather than probing the unique individual. Indeed the role of the judge has many overlapping qualities with the creator of Frankenstein. Each man pursues his own "creature" to the points of virtual insanity. They become obsessed with the monster they took part in creating to such extremes that these men put the welfare of their families in danger, and eventually cause their own inevitable demises. The antagonist to the judge is not the one to cause him physical harm, despite his intentions. Rather what kills him stems from his own internal mechanisms. Another point worth examining in this story stems from the authors' use of women; given the consideration that author is female. The leading woman in this story can be characterized in a victimized role, in which she is first portrayed as a powerless creature. Yet one must wonder where the motivation, given the gender of the author, for such an exclusion takes place. In Allende's 1988 piece she allows the feminine character, although weak and victimized knowledge and use of her sexual power. In fact the author uses this sexual power to finally bring the main character Nicholas to justice. The author makes clear the need for emotional and physical contact from the opposite sex. The authors

portraying of the idea that " Perhaps a woman's love would have made" these tortured characters "... less wretched" shows that the tenderness of a woman can tame any beast. Similarly within the texts of Frankenstein one can find a similar pattern in the request of the creature for feminine companionship. Both make indications in their stories that this type of love contains both a necessary and satisfying function. Isabel Allende uses a combination of literary tools and techniques to assemble a piece that in some ways reflects a great masterpiece. By refining strong imagery Allende gives the reader the ability to define the character not only through their dialog, but also through the visualization of the character. Indeed in " The Judge's Wife" much of the use of characterization gives the reader a complete picture of each of the main characters. The author adds another dimension to the side of her main character by mesmerizing use of theme. In combining all of these tools the characters are given a realistic overtone that makes this short story easy for the reader to enjoy. Word Count = 783