*The Devil and Tom Walker*

11-sentence paragraph

We just finished reading Washington Irving’s story, *The Devil and Tom Walker*, in which Tom Walker exchanges his soul for money. The story is framed as an old legend, and it is clear that Irving is telling a cautionary tale. Using the 11-sentence paragraph learned in class, select an element of the story – symbolic meaning, attitudes of the author, a moral – and analyze using three examples from the story. Some ideas are listed below, but feel free to develop your own. I have written my own paragraph to demonstrate.

The consequences of greed The devil in the story represents temptation

Irving’s viewpoints on marriage Symbolism of the woods in the story

The consequences of sacrificing your “soul” Shortsightedness

Clarify certain images Irving uses the lengths people go through for wealth

Example:

(1) In Washington Irving’s short story, *The Devil and Tom Walker¸* Irving uses metaphors to express the idea that a person should be more worried about the internal rather than the external. (2) For example, when Tom Walker is in the woods looking at the great trees, he notes that it is “fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core” (245). (3) The trees have the semblance of being mighty, but deep down they are worthless. (4) This represents the façade people often put out in the world when they are more concerned about how they look to others rather than who they are morally. (5) Additionally, when Tom Walker becomes wealthy, he builds himself a “vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony” (251). (6) Again, Irving is pointing out the focus on what the world sees versus the true worth of a person. (7) In the long run, that value and beauty is internal, rather than external. (8) Near the closing of the story, Irving describes Tom Walker as praying “loudly and strenuously” for all to hear (250). (9) As Tom Walker is trying to cheat the devil out of the conditions, he makes sure that everyone can see him praying and worshipping; he even carries his Bible around with him. (10) With this description, Irving is showing the reader that the outward signs of religion are not what saves a person’s soul. (11) Irving’s story can be seen as a life lesson; focus on the internal qualities that REALLY matter – goodness, morality, and honor.