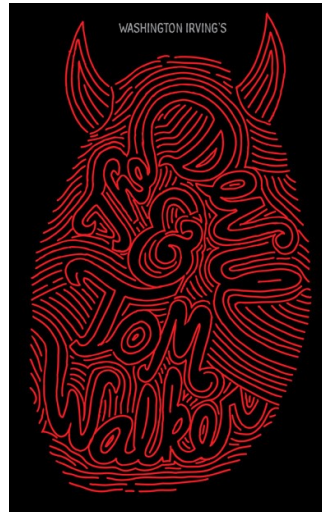


Questions

“The Devil and Tom Walker” by Washington Irving

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions.
To receive credit, you must write complete, thoughtful sentences.

1. What does Old Scratch offer Tom Walker and what does Old Scratch want in return?
2. Old Scratch is described as a “black” man, but not African-American or Indian. Describe his actual physical traits. Does he seem frightening to you?
3. Describe Mrs. Walker. What are her two main sins? What do you think happened to her when she disappeared? Did she deserve that fate? Symbolically, what do you make of the heart and liver that were left behind?
4. Do you consider Tom Walker to be morally better or worse than the other prominent Puritans in Boston? Be sure to include discussion of these three groups: the Puritans who persecuted Quakers and Anabaptists; the men whose names were marked on the trees in the swamp; the land speculators who ran “mad with schemes for new settlements.”
5. Consider the description of the swamp from the early section of the story. What might the swamp symbolize? Explain your answer.
6. What, do you suppose, were Deacon Peabody’s sins? After your answer, cite a line from the story that supports your opinion.
7. What’s the sin that is too distasteful even for Tom Walker? Why do you think Irving includes that brief passage in this tale, which he published in 1824?
8. This story features a third-person omniscient narrator who stands outside the action of the story and reports what different characters are thinking. What seems to be the narrator’s attitude toward the events of the story? What does Irving gain by using this type of narrator rather than having Tom relate the events?
9. What do you think was Irving’s primary purpose in writing this story? After your answer, cite a line from the story that supports your opinion.



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