

Young Goodman Brown Study Questions

Comprehension

1. Where is young Goodman Brown headed after sunset?
2. What signs do we see in the text that this destination is a frightening one on this particular night of the year?
3. How is Brown's wife an allegorical figure given her name?
4. How is Brown's own name and title potentially allegorical? (Hint: Where does Brown fit on the spectrum of black and white?)
5. Who does Brown meet first in the dark woods? Why do you suppose that figure appear the way the does in terms of clothing and mannerisms?
6. Who is Goody Cloyse? Why was she special to Brown in the development of his beliefs?
7. What falls from the sky that convinces Brown his wife is attending the witches' sabbat?
8. Who attends the Satanic coven in the woods, i.e., what sort of people?
9. What happens when Brown calls out to Faith to look to heaven rather than partake of the unholy ceremony?
10. What is carved on Brown's tombstone when he dies? (trick question!)

Analysis

1. How does the nighttime wilderness serve as a foil for the daytime village in this story?
2. Why is nothing carved on Brown's tombstone?
3. Why would Satan look so much like Brown himself? Why is that creepier than a demon with horns and pitchfork and cloven hooves?
4. Brown declares that he has "lost his faith." Faith in what, exactly? God? Or something else?
5. When describing the events in the woods, count how many times Hawthorne uses ambiguous language in diction like *seems*, *must*, *appears*, *perhaps*, and *maybe*. Why does Hawthorne want to leave all this so ambiguous? Why not tell us clearly whether something is happening or not happening?