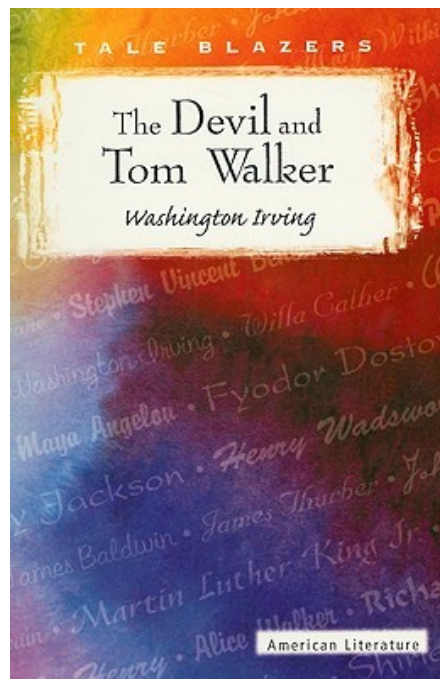




The Devil and Tom Walker

Washington Irving

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The Devil and Tom Walker Washington Irving

The Devil and Tom Walker a short story by Washington Irving that first appeared in his 1824 collection of stories titled *Tales of a Traveller*. The story is very similar to that of the ancient German legend of Faust.

The Devil and Tom Walker Details

Date : Published January 1st 2007 by Perfection Learning (first published 1824)

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Author : Washington Irving

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From Reader Review The Devil and Tom Walker for online ebook

Susan says

I know I've been a slow reader lately but it did not take me 6 weeks to finish this book. Honest. I read most the stories, liked a few, thought a few were boring and skipped over some.

This edition had some stories, travelogue, internal thinking pieces and was just a variety of material.

A good little book to pick up whenever you have a few spare minutes to read a short story.

Duane says

It's an old story, a story told a thousand times in a thousand different ways: a greedy person trades their soul for riches, and in the end regrets having made the choice. I really like this version because the characters Irving chose, the setting, and his descriptions of them were perfect. Mr. Irving knew how to tell a tale.

Craig says

Tom Walker and his wife are a miserly pair who live outside Boston in the late 17th Century. They are always at each other. One day Tom takes a circuitous route home through a swampy forest. As he stops to rest, he finds himself sitting across an opening from a swarthy looking man holding an ax. Tom discovers the man to be the incarnation of the devil (Old Scratch himself). Because of Tom's disfunctional homelife, he is not intimidated by evil and contention, but even attempts to strike a deal with the devil. The book becomes an allegory for the consequences of flirting with evil. Washington Irving crafts an interesting tale of the superstitions and mind-sets of early New Englanders. Irving was a contemporary of (and friend to) President Andrew Jackson. While his tale takes place 150 years earlier than when he lived, he makes reference to the evils of usury and the cut-throat practices undertaken by unscrupulous bankers of his day. (Reference Biddly and the national bank which President Jackson and Congress dissembled). Irving is a gifted writer. The narrative was interesting but did not captivate me.

Sofia Barreda Luna says

"They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveller stopped at its door."

In "The Devil and Tom Walker," Washington Irving makes the dull days of Tom and his wife come to life. The couple fights all the time, and they have stopped enjoying living. One day, Tom is presented with a deal so great that it could change his life, but he might have to pay a high price for his choice.

The description of the setting and the characters is remarkable. From the start, the imagery of the place is

highlighted in the story. The theme revolves around greed, and the negative effects it has on people. (view spoiler)

Irving makes Tom regret acting the way he did by actually giving what he asked for. I enjoyed reading a story that made me put things into perspective, value what I have, and be careful for what I wish for.

Majo(C) says

"The devil take me if I have made a farthing!"

Lets all take a moment to appreciate how EASY it was to read this. I didn't struggle. I didn't question my existence before understanding this story. I didn't need to google the meaning of every word. Irving just tells us a story with a really informal narrative. Plus, Irving used dialogue to make it ever easier! Plus, he really got into the setting and placed a pair of symbols. I appreciated a casual narrative, with amazing details.
(Time for a celebration dance...)

The theme of this story is how greed leads to disastrous temptation and destructs morals and values.

(
Tom Walker's own greediness took it to his own death. At the end, he had to live his life as a spectre. The theme was interesting, since it really makes you see how your morality can be completely smashed by anti-values and, in this case, greed and selfishness. Reading this story made me realize that at the end, all of the material stuff goes away and your morals, values and integrity is all that is left.

Joey says

The Devil and Tom Walker is a simple story with a classic moral: don't make a deal with the devil. I found Washington Irving's interpretation of the Proust fable to be fascinating. Irving makes the devil black, but his devil also pushes Tom Walker into the investing the devil's money into the slave trade. I'd love to read essays that put Irving's work into historical context so we could interpret his political intentions.

Gary says

People believed such stories! Well told stories of pride fallen into Hades!

Paige says

We read Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" in College Prep Junior English. I enjoy it because it makes me reminisce about a class I took in college where we read a lot of Faust tales. I talk about

this with my students, but the majority of them dislike this story (at least this year). Honestly, it's certainly not the best short story in the world, so I'm fine with them disliking it. My wish is that they'd give it a bit more thought so that they could at least intelligently explain why they dislike it.

Phil Slattery says

This is an entertaining bit of what might be better termed "folk supernatural suspense" rather than horror, but it does help illustrate the initial development of the horror genre in American Literature. What is perhaps most interesting to contemplate about this story is that this is the type of ghost/horror story that existed before the advent of Edgar Allan Poe and probably would have been the state of the American horror art when he was a young writer. One has to wonder what he thought of this story.

Mariana says

Famous for the creepy, yet intriguing story "Sleepy Hollow", Washington Irving brings us the life story of a miserable man highted Tom Walker. Why is his life miserable? He hates his wife (the loathe is mutual), has little money, and is very greedy.

The solution to his problems comes in the form of the devil when he finds "Old Scratch" on the swamps on his way home. The devil offers him a lost pirate treasure that is buried in the woods in return for his services. Tom declines the offer and his wife, who is probably double the greedy he is, thinks he is the fooliest man that has ever lived that is when things take a different turn.
(view spoiler)

If Tom does accepts this tempting offer, his life will be undoubtedly affected.

Tom Walker's life shows us how avarice can bring us problems and even trap us in our own misery. Trying to mend our mistakes by something we are not will not fix things.

These are some words said by Tom Walker in the story. (view spoiler)
"The devil take me if I have made a farthing!"

Carol says

Washington Irving's short story, **The Devil And Tom Walker** gets quickly to the point as the greedy, unscrupulous Tom sells his soul to the devil and *in the end* discovers the consequences.....

Latasha says

I remembered reading this in school & loving it. So I revisited it and I still love it!

Tiffany Peña says

Kids, don't be greedy or you might end up in one of Irving's story.

I actually loved this one. I loved the characters and how they were presented. It didn't take pages for me to know them but I actually got a good idea of who they are, well done Irving. The story is basically about this greedy man who doesn't like his life and decides to sell his soul to the devil. I loved his relationship with his wife and the foreshadowing presented in the story. I didn't see the ending coming, which I liked very much too. Overall, very interesting and I would absolutely recommend it.

Tim Pendry says

Washington Irving was a fine and fluid writer. This 1824 morality tale, though perhaps hackneyed in theme, is beautifully wrought and well worth reading.

Laine The Librarian says

Ever make a deal to someone, and you had to break the deal for personal reasons? The other person will get mad for sure, but they will either shrug it off, or they just won't speak to you. Simple right?

Not for Tom Walker.

For Tom Walker made a deal with the Devil and NO ONE walks away scot-free from the Devil.

Tom isn't that very bright man and he wants everything in life come to him freely. But with a woman who nags him everyday and work not going very well, his comfort in life is but a dream.

That is until he meets a mysterious stranger in the woods who stats everything in the land is his and for a pretty price it can be Tom's. Thinking only what will come to him, Tom doesn't see (or chooses not to) what happens when you break a deal. For when Tom found out who and what this mysterious stranger is, Tom takes the fortune and flees.

But no one really flees the Devil.

Mary Overton says

"Tom lifted up his eyes and beheld a great black man, seated directly opposite him on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither seen nor heard any one approach, and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true, he was dressed in a rude, half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body, but his face was neither black nor copper colour, but swarthy and dingy and begrimed with soot, as if he had been

accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions; and bore an axe on his shoulder.

"He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing in my ground?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds?" said Tom, with a sneer; 'no more your grounds than mine: they belong to Deacon Peabody.'

"Deacon Peabody be d---d," said the stranger, 'as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to his neighbour's. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring.'

"Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody...."

Patricio says

The Devil and Tom Walker is a short story written by Washington Irving. Mr. Irving was a short story writer of the early 19 century. The setting of the story is set to be in Boston, outside the city in an old house. Since the beginning of the story, the reader can inference that the story is going to be scary due to the setting.

The first characters present in the story are Tom Walker and his wife. Both are them are experiencing problems, which this adds suspense to the story. One day Tom decided to go for a walk, nearby his house he found The devil. The devil wanted to negotiate and trade a treasure with Tom Walker. The Devil told Tom Walker to give him his soul in exchange of money, but he denied. When Tom Walker wife heard of the deal, she angrily went to look for the devil to accept the deal. She wanted to make a deal with the devil but she died in the process.

I think that the main theme of the story is that you should always appreciate what you have. You need to live a happy life and stop being greedy. You need to enjoy life and learn to make right decisions. The story was simple great, the author used a marriage as an example. There are times when life can hit you, but you still need to be your very best. There will be people will try to bring you down but you need to follow the right path and make good decisions for your life.

"Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Brett Lee Burkeen says

One of my favorite short stories.

Damaris (C) says

"And away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder-storm."

Although you may not want to admit it, greed can often overpower us and make us act unethically. This is exactly the case with this short story in which Washington Irving writes about Tom Walker and his experience with the Devil's temptation.

This story's main focus, as said before, is greed, but in my opinion, it also is always being a good person (whether it relates to religion or not) and not only when you know that something bad could happen to you. (view spoiler)

Overall, this short story isn't as dark as Poe's, for example, but it does deal with themes that can be considered as dark. It is a story in which the end was pretty obvious ever since Tom's first encounter with the Devil. Would I read it again? Probably not, but it was quite entertaining.

Kelsey says

Not a bad short story, but nothing amazing either.
