

the devil and tom walker plot diagram

the devil and tom walker plot diagram offers a structured way to understand Washington Irving's classic short story, which revolves around themes of greed, moral corruption, and supernatural bargains. This article explores the story's plot structure by breaking down its essential components, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. By analyzing these elements, readers can gain deeper insight into the narrative's progression and thematic significance. Additionally, this guide highlights key characters and settings that influence the plot's development. Understanding the devil and tom walker plot diagram not only aids literary analysis but also enriches the appreciation of Irving's use of symbolism and moral lessons. The following sections provide a detailed examination of each plot stage, supported by examples and critical observations.

- Exposition: Setting and Characters
- Rising Action: The Faustian Bargain
- Climax: The Pact with the Devil
- Falling Action: Consequences and Downfall
- Resolution: Moral and Narrative Closure

Exposition: Setting and Characters

The exposition of the devil and tom walker plot diagram establishes the story's primary context, introducing the setting, main characters, and initial conflict. The narrative takes place in a remote, gloomy swamp near Boston during the early 18th century, creating an eerie and foreboding atmosphere. This environment reflects the dark themes of greed and moral decay that permeate the story. The protagonist, Tom Walker, is depicted as a miserly, selfish man, whose interactions with his equally greedy wife set the stage for the ensuing drama. Washington Irving uses vivid descriptions to portray Tom's character flaws and the oppressive nature of his domestic life. The exposition effectively sets up the story's central conflict—Tom's willingness to engage with evil forces to improve his financial situation.

Introduction of Tom Walker and His Wife

Tom Walker and his wife are introduced as a quarrelsome and avaricious couple, whose relationship is strained by mutual greed. Their constant bickering and selfishness emphasize the moral shortcomings that define their

characters. This characterization is essential to the plot, as it motivates Tom's eventual decision to make a deal with the devil. The wife's disappearance early in the story also serves as a catalyst, prompting Tom to confront the dark forces lurking in the swamp.

The Setting's Role in the Plot

The swamp setting symbolizes the murky moral landscape of the story. Its description as a "dark, dismal swamp" enhances the ominous tone and foreshadows the supernatural elements that will influence Tom Walker's fate. This setting is crucial for understanding the plot's progression, as it is the site where Tom encounters the devil and makes his fateful bargain.

Rising Action: The Faustian Bargain

The rising action in the devil and tom walker plot diagram centers on the development of Tom's encounter with the devil and the negotiation of their deal. This section builds tension as Tom considers the offer of wealth and power at a steep moral cost. The narrative explores Tom's internal conflict and growing ambition, illustrating how temptation and avarice lead him to accept the devil's proposal. This part of the plot is critical for establishing the stakes and foreshadowing the consequences of Tom's decision.

The Devil's Appearance and Offer

The devil, referred to as Old Scratch, appears to Tom Walker in the swamp, revealing his role as a collector of souls. Old Scratch offers Tom immense wealth in exchange for his soul, presenting a classic Faustian bargain. This encounter is described with supernatural overtones, heightening the story's dark mood. The devil's offer tempts Tom but also introduces the moral dilemma that drives the plot forward.

Tom's Deliberation and Decision

Initially hesitant, Tom eventually agrees to the bargain, motivated by his desire for financial gain and social status. His decision is marked by a lack of remorse and a willingness to sacrifice his soul, illustrating his moral corruption. The rising action culminates in Tom's acceptance of the deal, setting the stage for the story's climax and the unfolding consequences.

Climax: The Pact with the Devil

The climax of the devil and tom walker plot diagram occurs when Tom officially seals his pact with the devil. This moment represents the peak of

narrative tension and the turning point in Tom's fate. The story depicts the pact as a binding contract, symbolizing Tom's complete surrender to greed and evil. The climax is pivotal because it marks the irreversible step that determines Tom's destiny.

Sealing the Deal

Tom agrees to the devil's terms, which include handing over his soul after death. The story emphasizes the seriousness of this commitment through symbolic actions, such as Tom marking the agreement with a signature. This act signifies Tom's acceptance of the moral consequences that accompany his newfound wealth. The pact reflects the story's central theme of the dangers of greed and the perils of dealing with evil forces.

Immediate Effects on Tom's Life

Following the pact, Tom experiences rapid financial success and social ascendance. He becomes a moneylender and usurer, accumulating wealth through unscrupulous means. This transformation demonstrates the corrupting influence of the deal and intensifies the story's moral message. The climax thus serves as a fulcrum between Tom's rise and his impending downfall.

Falling Action: Consequences and Downfall

The falling action in the devil and Tom Walker plot diagram details the repercussions of Tom's pact and his gradual moral and physical decline. As the story progresses, Tom's greed deepens, and he becomes increasingly ruthless. This section illustrates how the initial promise of wealth leads to spiritual emptiness and impending doom. The falling action prepares readers for the story's resolution by highlighting the inevitable consequences of Tom's choices.

Tom's Increasing Greed and Ruthlessness

After securing wealth, Tom intensifies his usurious practices, exploiting others financially. His moral degradation is evident as he shows no empathy or remorse. This behavior alienates him from society and deepens his spiritual isolation. The falling action emphasizes that Tom's material success comes at the cost of his humanity and soul.

Tom's Attempt to Cheat the Devil

In an effort to avoid the fate promised by the pact, Tom attempts to repent by becoming a fervent churchgoer and carrying a Bible. However, these efforts

are depicted as superficial and self-serving, failing to absolve him of his earlier deal. This futile attempt to escape his destiny underscores the story's theme of inescapable consequences when dealing with evil.

Resolution: Moral and Narrative Closure

The resolution of the devil and tom walker plot diagram concludes the story with Tom's ultimate fate and the moral lessons imparted by his downfall. The narrative closes the plot arc by depicting the fulfillment of the devil's claim and reflecting on the broader implications of Tom's choices. This final section reinforces the story's cautionary message about greed and moral corruption.

Tom's Demise

Tom Walker meets a dramatic end when the devil comes to claim his soul, fulfilling the terms of their pact. His sudden disappearance and the mysterious destruction of his wealth serve as a stark warning against avarice and moral compromise. The resolution demonstrates that attempts to escape evil bargains are futile and that justice, whether divine or supernatural, ultimately prevails.

Lessons and Symbolism

The story concludes by highlighting the symbolic significance of Tom's fate. His demise serves as a moral lesson about the dangers of greed, the consequences of making deals with evil, and the importance of ethical integrity. The narrative suggests that wealth gained through immoral means is transient and destructive. The resolution brings the devil and tom walker plot diagram full circle, emphasizing its enduring relevance in literary studies and moral discourse.

1. Exposition sets the stage with setting and characters.
2. Rising action develops the temptation and decision.
3. Climax seals the pact and marks the turning point.
4. Falling action reveals the consequences and decline.
5. Resolution concludes with the moral and fate.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the exposition in the plot diagram of 'The Devil and Tom Walker'?

The exposition introduces Tom Walker and his wife, their unhappy marriage, and the setting of a dark, swampy forest near Boston.

What is the main conflict in 'The Devil and Tom Walker'?

The main conflict is Tom Walker's moral struggle after he makes a deal with the devil, trading his soul for wealth.

What events constitute the rising action in the story's plot diagram?

The rising action includes Tom discovering the devil's hidden treasure, making the pact with the devil, and becoming a usurer who grows increasingly greedy and corrupt.

What is the climax of 'The Devil and Tom Walker'?

The climax occurs when the devil comes to collect Tom's soul as a consequence of his deal, leading to Tom's sudden disappearance.

How is the resolution depicted in the plot diagram of the story?

The resolution shows that Tom's wealth is left behind and his property becomes desolate, serving as a moral lesson about greed and the consequences of dealing with the devil.

Additional Resources

1. *The Devil and Tom Walker* by Washington Irving

This classic short story tells the tale of Tom Walker, a miserly man who makes a Faustian bargain with the devil. Set in colonial New England, the story explores themes of greed, moral corruption, and the consequences of dealing with dark forces. The plot follows Tom's transformation after his pact and the eventual price he pays for his soul.

2. *Plot Structure and Analysis of The Devil and Tom Walker*

This analytical book breaks down the plot diagram of Washington Irving's story, examining its exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. It provides insights into the narrative techniques and thematic

elements that drive the story's moral lessons. Perfect for students and literature enthusiasts seeking a deeper understanding of the tale.

3. *The Faust Legend: A Comparative Study with The Devil and Tom Walker*

Exploring the origins and variations of the Faust legend, this book compares Washington Irving's story with other famous Faustian bargains in literature. It highlights the similarities and differences in how the devil's deals reflect cultural attitudes toward greed, ambition, and sin. Readers gain perspective on how the theme of selling one's soul has evolved over time.

4. *American Gothic Tales: The Devil and Tom Walker and Beyond*

This collection features a variety of American Gothic stories, including "The Devil and Tom Walker," emphasizing dark themes like supernatural pacts and moral decay. The book contextualizes Irving's work within the broader genre and discusses its influence on American literary tradition. It includes critical essays that dissect the story's gothic elements.

5. *Understanding Morality in The Devil and Tom Walker*

Focusing on the ethical dimensions of the story, this book explores the moral lessons conveyed through Tom Walker's choices and the consequences he faces. It discusses themes such as greed, punishment, and redemption in the context of early American society. The author also connects these ideas to modern interpretations of morality in literature.

6. *The Symbolism of the Devil in American Literature*

This scholarly work investigates how the figure of the devil is portrayed in American literature, with a significant focus on "The Devil and Tom Walker." It analyzes symbolic elements, such as the dark forest and the devil's appearance, and what they represent culturally and psychologically. The book is ideal for readers interested in symbolism and myth in literary studies.

7. *Plot Diagrams for Classic American Short Stories*

A practical guide for educators and students, this book provides plot diagrams for various classic American short stories, including "The Devil and Tom Walker." Each diagram visually maps out the story's structure, aiding comprehension and literary analysis. Supplementary commentary helps readers identify key plot points and thematic significance.

8. *Greed and Consequence: Themes in The Devil and Tom Walker*

This thematic study delves into the destructive nature of greed as portrayed in Irving's story. It examines how the narrative illustrates the dangers of avarice through Tom Walker's downfall and the supernatural elements surrounding his pact. The book also discusses the relevance of these themes in contemporary society.

9. *The Devil's Bargain: Exploring Deals with the Dark Side in Literature*

This book surveys various literary works centered on characters who make deals with the devil, including Tom Walker's story. It discusses the motivations behind these bargains and the inevitable repercussions. Readers gain an understanding of how this motif serves as a cautionary tale across different cultures and literary traditions.

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