

“The Devil and Tom Walker”

Characterization

You can learn about characters not only through direct characterization (what the author tells you directly) but also through indirect characterization (what you may infer from the details the author provides, such as their appearance or actions, and from what other characters say or how other characters respond to them). In the chart below, record a specific quote from the text and then indicate whether this is direct or indirect characterization. Finally, record what you can infer from this quote.

Characterization of Tom Walker		
What the text says (p. #):	Direct or Indirect?	What I can infer:

Characterization of Tom Walker’s Wife		
What the text says (p. #):	Direct or Indirect?	What I can infer:

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Analyzing Imagery

1. List some of the strong images from the first paragraph of the story. What do these details suggest about the place?
2. What are some of the images Irving uses in the next couple paragraphs of the story to describe Tom’s house and property? What do these details suggest?
3. What are some of images Irving uses to describe the part of the forest that Tom walks through? What mood do these images create? How might these details relate to the theme of the story?
4. Later in the story, Tom becomes wealthy through his practice of usury. Find some images or examples of figurative language that describe Tom and/or his clients. What do they suggest about Tom and his methods?
5. In the second to last paragraph (“The good people of Boston shook their heads . . .”), what message do the images suggest about material possessions and those who seek them?

Satire

Irving was a master of **satire**, a literary device in which people, customs, or institutions are ridiculed with the purpose of improving society. For example, Irving pokes fun at quarrelsome, complaining women: “Though a female scold is generally considered to be a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it.” Irving suggests that living with a complaining woman is as bad as living with the devil. Targets of Irving’s satire include women, Puritans, the slave trade, and moneylenders. Satire can be subtle, so look for the indicators of satire to help you: humor, exaggeration, absurd situations, and irony. Fill in the chart below with examples of Irving’s use of satire in “The Devil and Tom Walker.”

Quote from text	Target of satire	What Irving is saying