

“Young Goodman Brown” Help

Allusions, Historical References, and Vocabulary

anathema (paragraph 32): thing or person deemed to be damned or cursed.

cinque-foil (paragraph 32): Cinquefoil, a flowering plant of the rose family that has white, red, or yellow petals.

Egyptian Magi (paragraph 36):

e'en go thy ways (paragraph 25): Just (righteous) be thy ways.

Goodman: Husband or master of a household.

Goody: (1) Housewife, especially an elderly one, of a lower class; (2) any lower-class woman; (3) housewife or mistress of a household.

King William (paragraph 13): William III, king of England from 1689 to 1702.

King Philip (paragraph 18): Nickname of the Wampanoag Indian chief Metacom (or Metacomet). Maltreatment of Indians by whites provoked him into waging what came to be known as King Philip's War against New Englanders in 1675-1676. His defiance instilled fear in the white inhabitants of New England.

lecture-day (paragraph 21): Weekday on which a sermon was given.

proselyte (paragraph 60): person who converted from one belief or religion to another.

staff (paragraph 36): The narrator says, "So saying, he threw it [the staff] down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi." This passage alludes to verses 8-12 in Chapter 7 of the Bible's Book of Exodus. According to these verses, God directs Moses to tell Aaron, his brother, to cast down his staff before the throne of the pharaoh of Egypt. When he does so, it transforms itself into a serpent. The pharaoh's magicians (magi) then cast down their staffs, which in like manner turned into serpents. However, Aaron's staff consumes the staffs of the magicians.

wolf's-bane (paragraph 32): Wolfsbane, a poisonous plant.

wot'st: (paragraph 15): Know.

zenith: The point of the celestial sphere (what appears to be the surface of the sky or heavens) that is directly above an observer's head.

