

Think-Aloud Predictions for “Young Goodman Brown”

Young	<p>I wonder if the word "young" is important because it's the first word of the story. Maybe it's just a coincidence.</p> <p>I'm not sure if the word is just an adjective describing the character, Goodman Brown, OR maybe it's like one of those families where it's part of his name--like Big Dave and Little Dave.</p> <p>Since it's the first word of the story, there's no way to know if it's capitalized because it's the first word of a sentence or because it's part of his name.</p>
Goodman	<p>Goodman is not a very typical first name today. It's used as a last name, but from the sentence, this seems to be the person's first name. Maybe this is an older story.</p> <p>The name is probably symbolic too. Authors use a name like Goodman on purpose, since it puts the emphasis on the two parts of the word: good + man. From the passage it's hard to say whether it will be a story of someone who is a good man or if the name is ironic because he is not good. I wonder if this will be a story about someone good?</p>
Brown	<p>Brown doesn't really tell me much, because it could be anyone's last name. I wonder if that is part of the point. Maybe the author of the text wanted the character to be someone that anyone could identify with.</p> <p>I also wonder if there is anything important about the color symbolism. Why not Young Goodman Black or even Young Goodman Smith? Why brown?</p>
came forth	<p>"Came forth" is an older way of describing the character's actions. It seems really formal compared to the words that we might use today.</p> <p>I wonder if it's important that he's leaving the house and/or that he's leaving his wife. Do the formal words mean something about the fact that he's leaving? Or maybe it's just an older text, so the words are normal for the writer.</p>
at sunset	<p>The scene takes place "at sunset" so we know it's the end of the day. Why might sunset be important? It's the end of the day when everything gets dark. Maybe the story will take place at night, in darkness.</p> <p>Maybe the darkness has to do with the mood of the story--it's dark and, therefore, frightening and suspenseful. It seems to be the opposite of what should be happening at this time of day. He should be coming home for dinner, not leaving. So maybe there's something about opposites going on.</p>
street of Salem Village	<p>I know that Salem was where quite a few people were killed as witches, most of them women, so maybe this story involves witch hunts somehow. Why else would the author choose this setting? Maybe the wife will be accused of being a witch.</p> <p>By calling the town "Salem Village," the author makes me think that this is an older location. We would just call it "Salem" today.</p> <p>It could be a different Salem, of course. It doesn't have to be Salem, MA. It's hard to tell from just the first sentence.</p>
put his head back	<p>Why does he put back just his head? Maybe she can't step outside for a kiss? But it seems almost like something he thought of at the last second, like, "oh yeah, I should kiss her goodbye."</p> <p>So I assume that he loves her, but is there more to it? Maybe he does it as an afterthought, realizing that whatever errand he has is not as important as his wife. Maybe this will be his last kiss to her.</p> <p>I wonder what made him remember or think to step back. I wonder what she's thinking.</p>

after	<p>I think the word "after" really emphasizes that this is an afterthought for the character to step back and kiss his wife.</p> <p>Why not say "as" or "when"? I wonder why it's an afterthought for him. Is he distracted? Is he thinking about why he's leaving the house? Maybe they just had a disagreement.</p>
crossing the threshold	<p>Basically "crossing the threshold" means that he's leaving the house. We might say he walked out the door today. The word might mean that this is an older text.</p> <p>The word is symbolic too. First, a husband usually carries his wife across the threshold, but here, he's crossing the threshold to leave her behind. Maybe that's the idea of opposites again.</p> <p>Second, threshold might tell us that something is about to happen. When we talk about the threshold for something (like someone's threshold for pain), the word means that it's the point where something will happen. After he crosses the threshold, maybe he's moved beyond some important point in his life. I wonder what is going to happen when he leaves? Will it be something about his wife?</p>
exchange	<p>The word "exchange" seems like a funny word to describe kissing someone. It's more of a word I'd use to talk about a business deal or something really boring and unimportant. You might exchange phone numbers or exchange papers in class, but exchanging kisses?</p> <p>I understand what the author is getting at but I wonder if there's something about the kiss that's not very passionate. After all he forgets to kiss her at all in the first place.</p> <p>The other possibility is maybe that he's not supposed to be passionate in public. Maybe it's the word is telling us something about the time period or the society.</p>
a parting kiss	<p>Since the line tells us this is "a parting kiss," we know that the character is leaving. I wonder if he's actually going on a journey or a walk or something. You usually wouldn't give someone a "parting" kiss unless you were really parting.</p>
young wife	<p>The author tells us that the character is leaving his "young wife." The author has used the word "young" twice now--as the first word of the sentence and now as the next to the last one. Maybe the characters' youth is important to the story.</p> <p>Since they are both young, they probably haven't been married very long either.</p>
Overall Predictions	<p>Time Period: Colonial? Pre-colonial?</p> <p>Genre: Fiction</p> <p>Prediction: I think this is a story about a young man involving mystery or witchcraft.</p> <p>Explanation: I think this is a story about mystery because of the questions that the sentence raises. The events happen at the wrong time of day. They're in Salem, which is a town known for mystery. The main character is distracted and forgets his wife, even though they probably haven't been married long since they are both young. Even the way he kisses her is odd. He's too distracted to actually go back in the house. There are a lot of questions and mysteries and this is just the first sentence.</p> <p>I think it's an older piece because some of the words seem older. There are things that we wouldn't say today, and the main character's first name is a little unusual.</p>