

Books by the Stack



The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov

Presents a satirical drama about Satan's visit to Moscow, where he learns that the citizens no longer believe in God. He decides to teach them a lesson by perpetrating a series of horrific tricks. Combines two distinct yet interwoven parts, one set in contemporary Moscow, the other in ancient Jerusalem.

Why you'll like it: *Literary, novel-within-novel, darkly humorous, witty.*

About the Author: Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940) was a doctor, a novelist, a playwright, a short-story writer, and the assistant director of the Moscow Arts Theater. His body of work includes *The White Guard* , *The Fatal Eggs* , *Heart of a Dog* , and his masterpiece, *The Master and Margarita* , published more than twenty-five years after his death and cited as an inspiration for Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* .

Questions for Discussion

1. Why does Woland come to Moscow? Why does he give a public performance at the Variety Theater?
2. Why is Woland the instrument of Margarita's kindness toward Frieda and the master?
3. When Woland sees Margarita's compassion for Pilate, why does he tell her, "Everything will turn out all right, the world is build on that"? (p. 382)
4. Why as the master earned peace, but not light?
5. Why does Pilate dream that he is involved in an "interesting and endless" argument with Yeshua, "this philosopher, who had thought up such an incredibly absurd thing as that all men are good," and that Yeshua's execution never took place? (p.319)
6. Why must Margarita become a witch and host Woland's ball in order to rescue and be reunited with the master?
7. Why does Margarita become devoted to the master's novel?
8. Why is the story of Pontius Pilate presented as not only written by the master, but also told by Woland, dreamed by Ivan, and read by Margarita?
9. When Woland asks what she wants, why does Margarita choose to free Frieda from her punishment?
10. Why must the master and Margarita leave the material world at the end of the novel?
11. Why does Woland insist, against the beliefs of Berlioz and Ivan, that Jesus really existed?
12. When Nikanor Ivanovich dreams that he is being interrogated, why does interrogation take the form of a number in a stage production?
13. Why is the master's real name never revealed?
14. What kind of Devil does Bulgakov portray, and what kind of worldview does this choice suggest?

15. How does Bulgakov's depiction of writers and theater workers impact your reading of the book?

(Questions provided by publisher)



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