

READ THIS FIRST FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION!!!

“The Kugelmass Episode,” first published in the May 2, 1977, issue of *The New Yorker*, is Woody Allen’s fantastic tale of a dissatisfied humanities professor who has himself transported into the fictional world of Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*. Professor Kugelmass, unhappily married to his second wife, wants to have an affair, so he has a magician-entertainer named The Great Persky project him into Flaubert’s novel, where he embarks on a passionate affair with the title character, the spoiled and beautiful Emma Bovary. Allen presents a hilarious look at what happens when living out one’s fantasy becomes a reality and satirizes contemporary society in the process. The story’s humor comes not only from its bizarre situation but from its broadly drawn characters, parody of the entertainment industry, spoof of the male midlife crisis, ironic look at literature and its study, and satirical depiction of Jewish culture and manners. Although the story is a farce and immensely funny from beginning to end, “The Kugelmass Episode” does tackle the serious question of the human condition in modern times. Kugelmass, like Allen’s heroes in other stories and films, is a *schlemiel*, or hapless bungler who finds himself the victim of circumstances (often of his own making) in an absurd and confusing world. The story draws on Jewish humor and culture as well as classical and modern literature, using lowbrow humor to spoof high art. “The Kugelmass Episode,” which was published the same year Allen won his first Academy Award for the movie *Annie Hall*, won an O. Henry award for best short story in 1978. The story was included in Allen’s collection *Side Effects* in 1978, and has been widely anthologized. It appears in the 2003 collection, *Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker*.

Source: *enotes.com*

NOW WHAT????

Your task is to mimic Allen’s intent through a writing assignment of your own. Imagine that you have your own Great Persky and can be sent inside *The Crucible*. Being sent into this book would include living like a Puritan and dealing with a world without cell phones. You would also be stepping into a hotbed of controversy courtesy of the Salem Witch Trials. In a one page response, discuss what you would say and do if The Great Persky sent you to the Salem depicted in *The Crucible*. What would you be thinking? Who would you speak to? How would you approach them? What things/people/events might cause you to be cautious? Name one goal of this trip and how you would accomplish it as well. What would you want these people to see that they don’t presently see in the play?

This assignment is due _____.

