

JourneyForth Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you think analytically about the content of the book. The questions that follow are open-ended, allowing you to discuss various topics and issues addressed in the novel. They cover four broad categories: character, plot, setting, and theme.

The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day

by **Scott O'Dell**

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Introduction

William Tyndale (1492-1536) lived during the Lutheran Reformation. He not only agreed with Luther that salvation was by faith alone, but he also wanted everyone in England to be able to read the truth for himself from the Bible. Tyndale began translating the New Testament into English from Erasmus's Greek New Testament. When Bishop Cuthbert of London refused to support his work, Tyndale accepted financial assistance from some London merchants and moved to the city of Cologne. In 1525 he finished his translation of the New Testament.

The print shop in Cologne was raided, so Tyndale fled to the city of Worms. By 1526 he had six thousand inexpensive copies of the New Testament ready to be smuggled back to England for "the boy that driveth the plow" to read.

When Tyndale's translation of the New Testament appeared in England, Bishop Cuthbert called it "that pestiferous and moste pernicious poyson." He bought up all the copies he could find and burned them in St. Paul's churchyard. The more he tried to destroy the New Testament, however, the more fascinated the public became with it. Seven more editions were printed within the next ten years and smuggled into England.

Tyndale learned Hebrew to begin a translation of the Old Testament. By 1534 he had completed the Pentateuch, Joshua through II Chronicles, and Jonah. Henry Phillips, a gambler and scoundrel whom Tyndale believed was his friend, betrayed Tyndale as a heretic to the imperial officers of Charles V. Tyndale was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death. His last words were "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Tyndale was strangled before his body was burned.

Within months after Tyndale's death, Myles Coverdale completed the translation of the Old Testament. Fifteen hundred copies of the complete English Bible were printed in Antwerp and licensed for sale in England. They sold quickly. In 1539, a revision of Coverdale's Bible was officially approved by Henry VIII to be placed in every church in England. The King's decree required that a reader be provided so that those who could not read could hear God's Word.

Today only two complete copies of Tyndale's New Testament exist. The rest of the eighteen thousand copies were either burned or read until they fell to pieces. The authorities of the British Library call Tyndale's New Testament "the most important printed book in the English language."

Concerning character

1. An engaging story contains characters that are complex with both good and bad qualities. Tom, Uncle Jack, Tyndale, and even Belsey, are good examples. For each character, discuss some of his good and bad qualities, supporting your answer with quotes or examples from the book. For example:

Tom was a smuggler, an illegal occupation. He was also loyal to his friends. He did not tell Tyndale's enemies where he was hiding or seek revenge on his Uncle Jack after Belsey told him of his uncle's stealing the *Black Pearl*, Tom's rightful inheritance.

2. In what ways does Tyndale influence Tom's life throughout the book (pp. 17, 34-35, 65, 178-79)?
3. "Consider this," says Uncle Jack (pp. 94-95). "The successful labor of Herr Schoeffer in Worms. Your safe voyage down the Rhine. Our fortunate meeting in Antwerp. The storm withstood . . . A safe storing of our cargo. God favors our mission, eh, Tom?" Discuss whether Uncle Jack really believes in God's providence or not and give the reasons for your answer (pp. 19, 28, 88).
4. Phillips was Tyndale's main enemy. Considering all you have read about him and his actions, describe Phillips's character and treatment of Tyndale. How did Tyndale respond to Phillips (p. 160)? What does this reveal about Tyndale's character?
5. After Phillips betrays Tyndale, Tom, Ed Groat, and Juan seek Phillips out. "I will slit his throat quietly and push him into the fire," says Juan (p.177). Ed had "a club that would fell an ox. Lacking a club, he could attend to the matter with one blow of his fist" (p. 177). What did Tom do to Phillips to avenge Tyndale's death? Why?

Concerning plot

6. The plot of *The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day* focuses mainly upon Tyndale's life and his interaction with Tom Barton. While translating the Greek New Testament into the English language, Tyndale faced much opposition. List several points in the plot where this opposition occurs and the results of it. For instance:

It was not safe for Tyndale to translate in London. "In Wittenberg Martin Luther can work without being badgered and spied upon," Tyndale says. "That's not true in London. I've been here for most of a year and scarce a week goes by that I am not interfered with in some way by one of the numerous fanatics" (p. 16). As a result of the "spying and badgering" of Belsey, Tyndale goes to Hamburg to work in peace.

7. Review the large crowd gathering at St. Paul's Cathedral (pp. 7-11). Why were the five men being humiliated and their books burned?

8. A large part of the plot is Tom's struggle in dealing with Uncle Jack's manipulation of Tom's father's will and unlawful ownership of the *Black Pearl* (pp. 68-70). On page 107 Belsey demands a half-interest partnership with Tom in exchange for not turning Tom in to the authorities with his uncle. Review Tom's decision on page 108. What would you have done in his place? With specific plot points from the book, discuss several advantages and disadvantages of this partnership for the rest of the book. For example:

One advantage is that Tom did not go to jail with his uncle. A disadvantage is that Belsey and Phillips were able to keep close tabs on his meetings with Tyndale.

9. A good plot has a satisfactory ending—wrongdoings are righted and right actions are rewarded. Review the conclusion of *The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day* in chapter forty. Do you think Phillips and Belsey got what they deserved? Why or why not?
10. What do you think is the climax of *The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day*? Is it Tyndale's trial in Germany, Uncle Jack's death, Tyndale's betrayal by Phillips, Tyndale's trial and hanging in London, or some other point?

Concerning setting and historical context

11. After reading the publisher's note on pages iii-iv, how would you describe the setting in which Tom and Tyndale lived?
12. Why was it so important to Tyndale that each person, nobility and commoner alike, own a Bible in his own language?
13. In the introduction you learned that Luther taught against the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church. He also believed that the Scriptures should be the final authority in men's lives. Compare each statement below with the noted passages of Scripture.
 - a. The Catholic Church taught that a man can escape punishment for his sin and go to heaven through indulgences. Luther taught that no one could pay for his sin in this manner. Compare this teaching to Isaiah 43:24; Micah 6:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23.
 - b. The Catholic Church taught that the church, through the pope, should tell people what to believe and how to live. Those who rejected the Catholic Church or its doctrines would have anathema, *i.e.* a curse, placed on them. Luther taught that people should read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Compare this teaching to Matthew 15 and 1 Thessalonians 5:27.
14. Tyndale's last words were the following prayer: "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." To what was he referring? Was his prayer answered?

15. Several issues of sixteenth century England that were addressed in *The Hawk That Dare Not Hunt by Day* are still prevalent today. Four are listed below. For each one, provide examples found in the book and then explain how each is relevant today.
- Wrongness of smuggling and other illegal acts
 - Fairness of religious tolerance
 - Importance of God's Word to everyday people
 - Wrongness of vengeance on betrayers

Concerning tone and theme

16. In Tyndale's day translating the Bible into common language was considered heretical and therefore, illegal. On page 12 Tyndale preaches that the people must obey their king even though he is "cruel and downtreads them." The Bible also teaches in Romans 13, "let every soul be subject to higher powers" because God Himself has set those authorities over us. Yet Tyndale's life work is to translate the Scriptures into English. Is Tyndale being hypocritical by disobeying the laws of his day? Is he disobeying Romans 13? Give a Scripture verse to support your answer (see Acts 5).
17. A theme is an idea, concept, or message that is reinforced through the overall work. After studying pages 105–106, 116, 160, 173–174, and 178–179, what do you think is the main theme of the book?
18. A story's setting is the "where" and "why" of the story. One of the most important details of a setting is its atmosphere. On page 7 Tom comes upon a strange sight: "Surrounded by a jeering crowd," five "men . . . awkwardly rode backward, facing the horses' tails. Around each of their necks hung a coil of rope . . . and attached to the rope hung books and pamphlets of various sizes. Adding to the spectacle, each man wore a dunce's cap made of colored paper." A man "was shouting at the peak of his voice" (p. 7). The men "were stripped of their attachments, which were then tossed into a pile, doused with oil, and lighted with a torch . . . The mob cheered as the flames leaped high . . . The curses, the clenched fists, the stomping feet, the evil faces on all sides, the stench of the mob struck me as an ugly spectacle" (pp. 9-10). What is the atmosphere of this scene?
19. On trial for his religious beliefs, Tyndale "was brought in . . . and for the last time was asked to recant. He said nothing and moved" to his execution place without retaliating or trying to defend himself (p. 173). If you were put on trial for your faith, would you have the same sufficient grace from God to respond as Tyndale did? How would you want to respond?