# Whoso List to Hunt Study Guide

## Whoso List to Hunt by Thomas Wyatt (poet)

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# Introduction

Whoso List to Hunt is one of thirty sonnets written by Sir Thomas Wyatt. Although Wyatt never published his poems, several, including Whoso List to Hunt, appeared in the 1557 edition of the printer Richard Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets written by the Right Honorable Lord Henry Howard late Earl of Surrey and other*, more briefly referred to as *Tottel's Miscellany*.

Whoso List to Hunt is held to be Wyatt's imitation of Rime 190, written by Petrarch, a fourteenth-century Italian poet and scholar. In Whoso List to Hunt, Wyatt describes a hunt wherein a deer is pursued and ultimately owned by the royal who owns the land. Scholars generally believe that the poem is an allegory referring to Anne Boleyn's courtship by King Henry VIII, such that when Wyatt speaks of the deer as royal property not to be hunted by others, he is acknowledging that Anne has become the property of the King alone. Wyatt was said to have been interested in Anne and may have been her lover but would have withdrawn as a suitor after the King made clear his wish to claim her.

Wyatt introduced the sonnet, a fourteen-line poem with a fixed format and rhyme scheme, to England. Despite not publishing his poetry, Wyatt would have made his poems readily available to others. During the Elizabethan period, poets passed their work around in aristocratic circles, in what has been described as a sort of game of one-upmanship: each poet's work inspired his readers to create something comparable or better. Wyatt chose the Petrarchan sonnet as his inspiration. The Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem in which the first eight lines, the octave, present a problem, which is resolved by the final six lines, the sestet. Wyatt altered the Petrarchan formula, ending the sestet with two lines, a couplet, that rhyme. As such, he set a precedent for later poets, many of whom further altered the sonnet formula. Also, in focusing on a hunting allegory in Whoso List to Hunt, Wyatt demonstrated that sonnets could explore more than unrequited love, on which Petrarch had focused. Wyatt's poem is frequently found in literature anthologies, as well as in several editions of his own poetry, including *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems* (1975), edited by Joost Daalder.

# Author Biography

**Nationality 1:** English

**Birthdate:** 1503

**Deathdate:** 1542

Sir Thomas Wyatt is thought to have been born in about 1503 at Allington Castle, in Kent, England. Wyatt's father, Henry Wyatt, was a powerful and wealthy member of the Privy Council under two kings, Henry VII and Henry VIII. Henry Wyatt's influence was such that his young son Thomas was allowed to be an honorary attendant at the christening of Princess Mary in 1516. Some scholars assume that Thomas Wyatt was educated at Cambridge, since young men of his rank commonly attended that institution. In 1520, Wyatt married Elizabeth Brooke; their son, also named Thomas, who would later be known as Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger, was born in 1521. The elder Wyatt's marriage had apparently ended by 1525, when he charged his wife with adultery and ceased to live with her.

Wyatt's political career advanced quickly. Initially, he served in minor clerical roles in the royal court, such as clerk of the king's jewels. In 1525, Wyatt was part of an official delegation to the French court, and the following year he accompanied a legation to the papal court in Rome, where he apparently became acquainted with the poetry of Petrarch, a fourteenth-century Italian. After his return to England, Wyatt began translating Petrarch's poems, becoming the first Englishman to compose a sonnet, a fourteen-line poem with a specific format. Wyatt's primary focus, however, was his life as a courtly gentleman. By 1532, he had found a political patron, Thomas Cromwell, who was secretary and adviser on religious matters for Henry VIII. By 1535, Wyatt had been knighted and awarded considerable property and men to command in Kent. The following year, Elizabeth Darrell became Wyatt's mistress, which she would remain until his death.

Wyatt was imprisoned several times, once after being accused of being one of the lovers of Anne Boleyn, who became the second wife of Henry VIII; Wyatt was able to watch Boleyn's execution in 1536 from his prison cell in the Tower of London. Within months, he had been cleared of charges and was freed. In 1540, Wyatt's patron, Cromwell, was executed, and the following year Wyatt was arrested yet again. Nevertheless, he once again found favor in the court. Although Wyatt was a knight with considerable courtly importance, he is best known as a poet. He made translations of Petrarch popular in England and also created his own sonnets. No precise date has been attributed to his poem □Whoso List to Hunt,□ but scholars generally assume that it was written sometime in the late 1520s or early 1530s, as the subject of the poem is thought to be Anne Boleyn, who was then being courted by Henry VIII. As was common during this period, Wyatt never published his works; indeed, he had no financial incentive to do so. Poetry was a diversion, not a vocation. Sir Thomas Wyatt died in Sherborne, England, in the fall of 1542.

# Plot Summary

## Lines 1-4

In line 1 of □Whoso List to Hunt,□ the narrator states that for those who wish to hunt, he knows of a particular hind, a female deer. The narrator himself is trying to abandon the hunt, acknowledging in line 2 that this hind is beyond his reach. Indeed, he is □wearied□ from the □vain travail,□ the useless work, of the hunt; he has begun to recognize the futility of the pursuit. He laments in the fourth line that he is the last of the pursuers, the one □that farthest cometh behind.□

## Lines 5-8

In the second stanza, the narrator states that he cannot take his □wearied mind . . . from the deer.□ When she flees, he proclaims, □Fainting I follow.□ Nevertheless, he is ultimately forced to indeed abandon the chase, as she is too fast and all that he can catch is the wind that rises after she passes. In sum, the first eight lines, the octave, state the problem of the writer's wasted hunt.

## Lines 9-14

In the closing sestet, the invitation initially offered by the narrator to whoever wishes to hunt this particular hind is partly rescinded; in line 9, the narrator states that he will remove any doubt about the wisdom of doing so. Just as his hunt was in vain, so would be those of other hunters, as the hind wears a diamond collar around her neck proclaiming her ownership by another. The concluding couplet notes that the collar reads □*Noli me tangere*,□ or □Touch me not□ in Latin. Thus, the first part of the warning is □Touch me not, for Caesar's I am.□ According to legend, long after the ancient Roman emperor Caesar's death, white stags were found wearing collars on which were inscribed the words □*Noli me tangere; Caesaris sum*,□ or □Touch me not; I am Caesar's.□ The first part of that phrase, □*Noli me tangere*,□ is also a quotation from the Vulgate Bible, from John 20:17, when Christ tells Mary Magdalene, □Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.□ In the final line, the warning on the collar continues: the deer herself declares that while she appears tame, holding her is dangerous, as she is wild.

# Themes

## Courtly Love

Traditionally, early English sonnets focused on romantic and idealized love, as did the Petrarchan sonnets that inspired the English to adopt the format. The love sonnet often celebrated the woman's beauty, comparing in great detail the features of her face and body to forms in nature. For example, a poet might compare a woman's cheeks to roses in bloom. In □Whoso List to Hunt,□ Wyatt deviates from the typical love sonnet and casts the woman as a deer, who is pursued in an evidently ardent fashion. In being not an inanimate object of the suitor's affection but a wild animal in flight, the female has more personality than the typical subject of a courtly love poem. While she does not speak, she holds a sort of dialogue with the narrator through her actions and through the display of her collar. Thus, Wyatt shifts the perspective on courtly love to focus on the ideas of masculine desire and ownership.

## Divine Right of Kings

The doctrine of the □divine right of kings□ held that kings were God's representatives on earth and that all of the king's subjects were, in fact, his property. The final lines of the sonnet, when it is revealed that the hind's collar declares her to be the property of Caesar alone, allude to this doctrine. The royal ruler supposedly had the right to possess this female, regardless of her wishes or the desires of any other suitors. While he courted Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII gave her many gifts, which established that he was serious about her. These gifts also served to warn other suitors that the object of the King's desire was not available to other men. Although Anne Boleyn did not wear a collar inscribed with the King's name, she wore jewels and other gifts that he supplied. As king, Henry VIII would have believed in his divine right to possess his subjects, and he would not have been shy about seizing whomever he desired.

## Obsession

In Wyatt's sonnet, the hunter can be said to be obsessed with possessing his prey. He describes himself as □wearied□ twice, in lines 3 and 5. In line 7, he refers to himself as □fainting□ as he continues to follow the hind, even as she flees him. The pursuit is dangerous, as the deer is labeled as royal property, but the hunter follows anyway. When a desire is so intense that it cannot be ignored, even when danger is present, it might be labeled an obsession; mere reasoning is not enough to rid the obsessed lover of his desire.

## Sexism

The object of the hunt in Wyatt's sonnet is a hind, a female deer, which is held to represent the person of Anne Boleyn. The deer is hunted as prey and wears a collar that proclaims her ruler's ownership over her. This portrayal of a woman as a forest animal to be hunted and possessed reflects the low esteem with which women were often viewed in Elizabethan society. In this allegory, courtship and wooing have no role in the relationship between hunter and hunted, and the female cannot escape the fact that she is a royal possession.

# Style

## Allegory

In literature, an allegory is an extended metaphor in which objects and events hold symbolic meanings outside of the literal meanings made explicit in the narrative. In Wyatt's sonnet, the hunter's pursuit of the hind can be held to represent Wyatt's pursuit of Anne Boleyn, and the hind's being the property of Caesar can represent the ownership of Anne Boleyn by King Henry VIII. All of the accompanying descriptions of the hunt and the hunter's emotions, then, can be applied to this actual romantic situation.

## Petrarchan Sonnet

The Petrarchan sonnet, also known as the Italian sonnet, consists of two separate sections. The first part is the octave, an eight-line stanza, wherein a problem or issue is put forth. The second part is the sestet, wherein some resolution to the problem is provided. In Whoso List to Hunt, the octave describes the futile pursuit of the hind, while the sestet explains why the hunter cannot capture his prey: she is the property of her royal master, and to capture her would endanger both the hind and the hunter. More specifically, Wyatt's sestet consists of a quatrain (four lines) and a couplet (two lines), as can be seen in examining the rhyme scheme. Petrarch divided his sonnets into octaves of *abbaabba* and sestets of various rhyme schemes, usually *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*. Wyatt's rhyme scheme is slightly different: *abbaabba, cddc, ee*. Within such structures, certain rhymes may be somewhat irregular, particularly in that certain words may have been pronounced differently in Elizabethan times. In Wyatt's sonnet, *wind*, as in breeze, with a short *i* sound, is held to rhyme with the long *i* of *hind*, *behind*, and *mind*. Similarly, in the last couplet, the long *a* of *tame* is held to rhyme with the short *a* of *am*. In reading that couplet aloud, one might distort the sounds of either or both of those words in order to approximate a rhyme. In ending with a couplet, Wyatt puts emphasis on both of the last two lines; in contrast, the Petrarchan form places more emphasis on the last line of the octave and the last line of the sestet.

## Pentameter

The most common meter of the Elizabethan period was pentameter, wherein a line of verse contains five measures, or feet. If each foot contains two syllables such as with an iamb, where the second syllable is stressed each line will contain a total of ten syllables. The resulting rhythm can heighten the reader's aesthetic appreciation of and emotional response to the poem. The best way to understand iambic pentameter is to read a poem aloud, paying close attention to the sounds of the stressed and unstressed syllables. Wyatt's use of iambic pentameter was irregular; in fact, when some of his poems were included in *Tottel's Miscellany*, the printer revised and smoothed out the

meter. In ☐Whoso List to Hunt,☐ lines 1, 4, 6, and 8 contain eleven syllables, and line 14 contains only nine syllables; the remaining lines all contain the expected ten syllables. With respect to the measures, or feet, line 10, for example, can be read as a sequence of five iambs; in line 5, on the other hand, only the last two feet are true iambs, while the first three are either trochees, with the first of two syllables stressed, or spondees, with the first and second syllables both stressed. Wyatt used meter and measure irregularly to create his own style.

## Visual Imagery

Within a poem, the relationships between images can suggest important meanings. Line 3, ☐The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,☐ calls to mind the image of a hunter weary with a chase; in being aware of the poem's allegory, the reader will associate this image with a suitor who has exhausted himself in trying to court the object of his affection. Throughout the poem, then, images of the active hunt are associated with the romantic situation in question, endowing it with a degree of excitement that might not otherwise be present. Indeed, effective visual imagery allows the reader to experience a poem in a heightened fashion.

# Historical Context

## The Court of Henry VIII

Wyatt created his sonnets during a period of sweeping artistic and cultural change, in the beginning of an era known as the English Renaissance. The English Renaissance was dominated by literature, whereas much of the continental European Renaissance was dominated by art and architecture. By the latter part of the sixteenth century, English literature was characterized by Christian beliefs; in particular, the conflicts created by the dissolving of the Roman Catholic Church and the establishment of the Anglican Church by Henry VIII received much focus. Wyatt's poetry predates this focus on Christianity, instead showing the influence of the Italian Renaissance and the work of Petrarch.

Wyatt was a courtier and diplomat in the court of Henry VIII, who was immediately popular upon becoming king in 1509. He was tall and handsome, with the stature of an athlete, and the people loved him. As Henry VII was dying, he urged his son to marry Catherine of Aragon, who had been engaged to Henry's older brother, Arthur, before his death. Marrying Catherine would maintain the nation's alliance with Spain, which was politically important to England's security. Indeed, six weeks after his father's death, Henry VIII married Catherine, who became queen.

Early in his reign, the young Henry VIII became a patron of the arts, encouraging music and literature in his court, such that Wyatt would have certainly felt comfortable as both courtier and poet. Henry was intelligent and well educated. He spoke French, Spanish, and Latin, and he composed music and wrote books, in addition to spending much time hunting and playing tennis. His interest in the joust and other acts of knightly pageantry extended to the field of conflict. He enjoyed displays of power, especially his own. He held large banquets, balls, and jousts, including a joust between the kings of England and France. Overall, the court of King Henry VIII was focused on theatrical displays and diplomacy and on seizing the pleasure of the moment.

## Religion and Royal Marriage

As a young man and new husband, Henry VIII was very religious. He wrote and published a very popular book, *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, defending the Roman Catholic Church and attacking Martin Luther. Luther was a German Augustinian monk who in 1517 challenged the excesses and abuses of the Roman Catholic Church by nailing ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral. Luther's actions led to the Protestant Reformation. The attack on Luther by Henry VIII was very successful and went through several printings. In response, Pope Leo X rewarded the King with the title □Defender of the Faith□ in 1521.
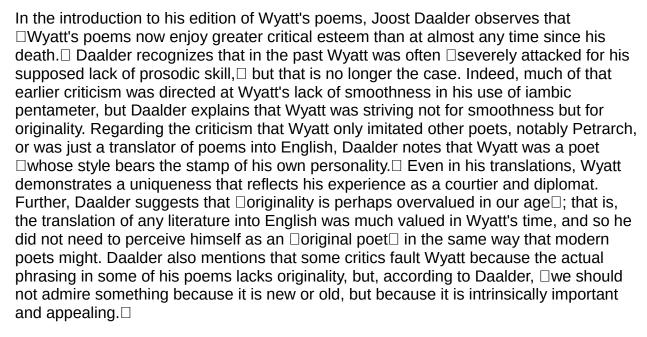
Later, however, Henry VIII would come to regret some of his defense of papal authority when his desire for a son began to outweigh his devotion to the Catholic Church. Although Catherine gave birth to a son in 1511, he did not survive. After a series of miscarriages and stillbirths, Princess Mary was born in 1516. Although the child was healthy, Henry wanted a son, and he soon began to think that he had offended God by marrying his older brother's intended wife. Henry VIII was only the second Tudor king, and he was concerned that not leaving a male heir would put the Tudor dynasty at risk. He became convinced that his marriage to Catherine was unlawful in God's eyes and that he needed to divorce Catherine and find a new queen, who would provide him with a son. Thomas Cardinal Wolsey tried for five years to persuade Pope Clement VII to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine, but he was unsuccessful.

The King's desire to divorce Catherine preceded his love of Anne Boleyn. By 1527, Henry VIII was indeed in love with Anne and wanted to marry her, and as Wyatt's poem attests, Henry's courtship of Anne was no secret. She was beautiful and more flamboyant and glamorous than Catherine, and Henry loved displays of beauty. By January 1533, Anne was pregnant, and she and Henry were secretly married. That year, too, Henry persuaded Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, to annul his marriage to Catherine. By 1534, a series of parliamentary actions had reduced the pope's authority in England, and the pope responded by excommunicating Henry. The English clergy and members of the court were then forced to choose between Henry and the pope; those who chose the pope were executed, and Henry also dissolved the monasteries and seized their land and goods. The romance with Anne Boleyn resulted in the English Protestant Reformation, which, in turn, more than doubled the King's revenues. Indeed, King Henry VIII was supreme in his own country, and he demanded that his subjects support his decisions. Those who did not were arrested, tried for treason, and executed. Wyatt's poem suggests that hunting royal property could be dangerous; he could not have foreseen that such danger could arise not only from the pursuit of the King's ☐hind☐ but also from religious and political actions.

# Critical Overview

Wyatt is considered the first of the great Elizabethan poets. His experiments with new formats, especially regarding meter and measure, were very influential in inspiring the great English poets who followed later in the sixteenth century, such as Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and, of course, William Shakespeare. Wyatt did not publish his poems, but he did circulate them within the Tudor court, where they were read and enjoyed. As a reflection of Wyatt's importance in the English literary canon, several new editions of his poetry were published in the last thirty years of the twentieth century, offering important insight into his work. Among the best are *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, edited by Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson (1969); *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems*, edited by Joost Daalder (1975); and *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems*, edited by Ronald A. Rebholz (1981).

In the introduction to his edition of Wyatt's poems, Joost Daalder observes that □Wyatt's poems now enjoy greater critical esteem than at almost any time since his death.□ Daalder recognizes that in the past Wyatt was often □severely attacked for his supposed lack of prosodic skill,□ but that is no longer the case. Indeed, much of that earlier criticism was directed at Wyatt's lack of smoothness in his use of iambic pentameter, but Daalder explains that Wyatt was striving not for smoothness but for originality. Regarding the criticism that Wyatt only imitated other poets, notably Petrarch, or was just a translator of poems into English, Daalder notes that Wyatt was a poet □whose style bears the stamp of his own personality.□ Even in his translations, Wyatt demonstrates a uniqueness that reflects his experience as a courtier and diplomat. Further, Daalder suggests that □originality is perhaps overvalued in our age□; that is, the translation of any literature into English was much valued in Wyatt's time, and so he did not need to perceive himself as an □original poet□ in the same way that modern poets might. Daalder also mentions that some critics fault Wyatt because the actual phrasing in some of his poems lacks originality, but, according to Daalder, □we should not admire something because it is new or old, but because it is intrinsically important and appealing.□

In the first chapter of *Imitating the Italians: Wyatt, Spenser, Synge, Pound, Joyce*, Reed Way Dasenbrock refers to Wyatt as the □first great English Petrarchan,□ conveying how important he was in influencing other poets, especially the greatest poets of the English Renaissance. According to Dasenbrock, Wyatt deserves greater admiration than has been forthcoming from literary scholars; he argues that Wyatt's □translations and imitations of Petrarch created a tradition of (and a form and language for) writing love sonnets in English, which later culminated in the great sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare.□ That is, Dasenbrock sees Wyatt's imitations of Petrarch as critical contributions to Elizabethan poetry. Indeed, in the early sixteenth century, poets were expected to imitate the great masters of the past □in accordance with the Italian Renaissance canons of imitation that Petrarch himself established.□ Dasenbrock perceives that in altering the sonnet format, Wyatt □transforms all of these poems into his own highly personal poems of lament and reproach,□ and as a result □these poems of Wyatt have great intensity and power.□ He asserts that Wyatt's

interest in and work with Petrarch's poetry, in short, was one of the seeds of the English Renaissance.

# Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

# Critical Essay #1

*Metzger Karmiol has a doctorate in English Renaissance literature and teaches literature and drama at the University of New Mexico. In this essay, she discusses Wyatt's representation of the hind and argues that Wyatt's depiction of a hunted woman as an animal parallels the very real risk that women faced in a society in which they held no power.*

In early-sixteenth-century England, women had little identity that was their own to possess. Women were governed by fathers, brothers, and husbands, belonging to these men in a very literal sense, as property. Women were expected to be chaste and to present themselves in a manner that would not elicit gossip or in any way diminish the reputations of their male owners. Women's lack of power in this society provides an important framework in which to examine Wyatt's sonnet Whoso List to Hunt. The hind's status in the poem as the property of a royal owner makes her too dangerous for the narrator to hunt, and she is also herself at risk in being the property of a powerful man. The hind's seeming inability to recognize this danger, as a mere animal, adds to the complexity of the narrative, especially when the cultural and historical realities of the Tudor court are considered. Wyatt disguises the real-life female subject of the poem as a hind not because her identity is unimportant but because naming her would have created gossip that would endanger both poet and woman.

Hunting the hind is evidently a familiar activity for the narrator. The sonnet begins with the narrator stating, I know where is an hind. He does not say that he knows where there *are* hinds; he knows where there *is* a specific hind. Thus, he immediately establishes that he has hunted *her* before, and the choice of animal is not random. The hunter admits that he cannot possess the hind and eventually warns off other hunters. Feminists might argue that Wyatt trivializes women in reducing the female subject to prey being chased through the forest by an eager hunter, but such an assessment limits the poem's possibilities. Within the language of poetry, an author can obfuscate meaning and deny intent by claiming that the reader has misread the text; in his sonnet, Wyatt clouds his meaning through the creation of the hind.

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, a book that examines the interplay between culture and certain poets' identities, the critic Stephen Greenblatt discusses Wyatt's caution in choosing the right words for his sonnet and the way in which he uses his language to disguise meaning. Greenblatt suggests that a cultural and historical reading of the poem might focus on Wyatt's experience as a diplomat when Henry VIII was negotiating treaties with the French and Spanish. Wyatt was conversant in several languages and certainly understood how the precise meanings of words could be crucial in diplomacy. According to Greenblatt, Wyatt was

highly conscious of the potential shifts in meaning as words pass from one language to another, and this sensitivity intersects with an acute awareness of the way conventions of courtesy and friendliness may conceal hostility and aggression, on the one hand, or weakness and anxiety, on the other.

As Wyatt's poem makes clear, the hunter recognizes that there is real risk for whoever pursues this hind. In the penultimate line of his sonnet, Wyatt writes, □*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am.□ The Latin phrase on the collar, □Touch me not,□ makes clear that she is owned by another man. This is a deliberate divergence from the original Petrarchan sonnet, in which the hind explains that the collar is meant to free her, even from Caesar's ownership. In line 11 of Petrarch's □Rime 190,□ the collar of the doe explains, □It pleased my Caesar to create me free.□ Caesar was often identified as a god to Roman citizens, and so this line suggests that a god has set the hind free. In Wyatt's sonnet, the collar signifies not freedom but ownership. The hunt is abandoned not because the hind is meant to be free but because she is the property of a powerful owner. Greenblatt points out that □the collar stops the hunt, transforms the hind from prey to pet or possession,□ although she does not behave as a possession. Indeed, Greenblatt explains that the collar itself is a □manifest sign of her wildness.□ Its presence implies that she is otherwise impossible to grasp (note the line □wild for to hold□), just as the narrator states in line 8 that he is essentially seeking to capture the wind. With respect to the poem's allegory, the woman in question is wild in that society cannot tame or control her. This is especially relevant in the patriarchal society of sixteenth-century England, in which women were to be controlled, first by fathers and brothers and later by husbands.

One might easily study this poem and focus on what is missing□a clear feminine identity with which modern readers can identify. According to Marguerite Waller, the poem holds nothing for the female reader. In Waller's essay, □The Empire's New Clothes: Refashioning the Renaissance,□ she points out that Wyatt's poem is about a man, the hunter. Waller notes that the poem was created for male readers, which is of course historically true, as the predominately English poets of the Renaissance would have passed their poems around only to their male friends. Since women had so little poetic voice early in the sixteenth century as to be essentially nonexistent, women's lack of real identity as the subjects of men's poems is unsurprising. But this lack of identity limits only the woman reader who chooses to ignore the poem's historical and social context. When Waller asserts that women readers □contemplate an image of their own nonidentity or noncoincidence with themselves when they try to read themselves as readers of this poem,□ she is trying to amend a cultural injustice that cannot be changed. Waller points out that a feminine presence cannot be found in Wyatt's poem, such that a woman instead □comes face to face with a kind of 'nonbeing' when she tries to read herself in the story of the hunter.□

Indeed, □Whoso List to Hunt□ is a text in which the reader is meant to identify with the male hunter. However, to argue that there is no feminine identity ignores the implied presence of Anne Boleyn, whose story can be understood as a clear warning of the dangers that result when women are appropriated as property by rich and powerful males. Waller claims that the hunt □casts the poet in the role of aristocratic hunter and the beloved in the role of an animal to be hunted□ as well as that the □poet's superior social status and the inferior status of the woman□ are not challenged. But again, Waller is discounting historical reality. In sixteenth-century England, women were judged to be inferior□even women such as Anne Boleyn, who perhaps had more notoriety than most. Although women readers should acknowledge Wyatt's trivialization of the

feminine, the poem still stands as a historical and cultural representation of the way in which courtship and politics could be intermingled by the poet. Henry's court, of which Wyatt was a member, would not have separated love from politics.

All of the Tudor court—including Wyatt, according to gossip—was obsessed with Anne. In that Anne was later executed for adultery, her story and the importance of an unsullied reputation add another layer of complexity to the sonnet. In *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, Susan Dwyer Amussen proposes that women's reputations were more easily threatened than were men's. In many cases, vague allegations were enough to prove hazardous to women, and as a possession of the King, Anne would have been especially vulnerable to gossip involving infidelity. In The Fall of Anne Boleyn, G. W. Bernard assesses the evidence against Anne in an effort to determine whether the charges of infidelity were true or just gossip. Ultimately, Bernard decides that Anne was executed because she really did commit adultery, perhaps in an effort to become pregnant and supply Henry with a male heir or perhaps because Henry was unfaithful and she was jealous.

As Amussen suggests in her discussion of challenges to social order, The primary challenge to social expectations within marriage arose when women interpreted gender in ways that differed from the prescriptions of social theory. Anne's mistake, then, was in not recognizing that the rules for women were different than those for men. As Bernard observes, her downfall might have been a defiant resentment of the double standard which allowed that freedom [infidelity] to men but not to women. In evaluating historical documents and what is known about Anne's reputation, Bernard notes that, according to rumors, before Henry was to marry Anne, he asked Wyatt what he thought of her: Wyatt had told the King not to marry her because she was a bad woman. In response, Henry banished Wyatt from the court for two years as punishment. Later, after Anne was arrested for adultery and just days before she was to be executed, Wyatt was also arrested. Bernard notes that, again according to rumor, Wyatt wrote to Henry, reminding him of what he had said, and adding that he knew what Anne was like, because she had been willing, many years ago, to kiss him. This is supposition, as no real records prove either why Wyatt was arrested or why he was released, but this possible episode offers one way to evaluate the last line of Wyatt's sonnet.

One might posit that within Wyatt's poem, the hunter is even less powerful than the hind. Although women had no power in this period, neither did men when confronted with the King's desires. Greenblatt suggests that the intensity of the hunter's grief at the loss of the hind means that neither audience nor poet is permitted to stand at a comfortable distance from the speaker. Greenblatt contends that Wyatt's poem is not merely a monologue; the readers are participants. The hunter longs for the woman, and this passion draws the reader into the poem and forces a response. The fact that the woman is depicted as a wild animal should be irrelevant, as the discerning reader understands that the poem offers layers of complexity and disguise regarding the hunter's unabated desire, which is leashed only because the risk is too great. The lesson for female readers is not that there is no feminine identity; it is that the

expression of the feminine entails risk, especially in a society in which women lack power.

**Source:** Sheri Metzger Karmiol, Critical Essay on Whoso List to Hunt, in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2007.

# Adaptations

Four of Wyatt's poems were adapted by Thea Musgrave and recorded in 1953 as *Four Madrigals*, published by Chester Music. The songs are eight minutes in length and are sung by an unaccompanied chorus.

# Topics for Further Study

Select at least two additional sonnets by other sixteenth-century poets, such as William Shakespeare or Sir Philip Sidney, to read alongside Wyatt's ⬜Whoso List to Hunt⬜ and the Petrarchan sonnet that inspired Wyatt, ⬜Rime 190.⬜ Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the rhyme and meter of these four sonnets as well as the manner in which the English poets use the sonnet to explore different topics of Elizabethan life. Discuss what your findings suggest about the evolution of the sonnet form and about the interests and abilities of each poet.

The court of King Henry VIII was filled with gaiety and spectacle. Henry was himself well known for his elaborate clothing, and he encouraged his courtiers to dress for ⬜show⬜ as well. Research the garments characteristic of the Tudor court and create a poster presentation of your findings, using illustrations to help explain the nature and purpose of the various articles. Explain what these clothes reveal about the Tudor court and especially about what the people valued.

Watch one of the film versions of the life of Henry VIII and his six wives and compare the film to what you have discovered through research about the real six wives of Henry VIII. Create an individual ⬜biography⬜ for each wife that will function as a comparative study guide; then, after watching the film, make a poster or graph for each wife's comparison. Discuss the changes that the film's actors and director made to the actual personages and events and why those changes might have been made.

A feminist study of Wyatt's poem ⬜Whoso List to Hunt⬜ might focus on the objectification of the woman prey, who is hunted as if she were a forest animal. Research the roles of women in sixteenth-century English society, paying particular attention to how women acted as daughters, wives, and mothers. Write a report that examines the following issues: Consider how wealth or poverty affected women's roles. How much control did women have over their bodies and their property? Discuss women's legal rights, if any, and what they might have done if they chose not to marry. Evaluate the lives of these women in relation to the lives of women in modern society. Finally, considering the role that you might have played as either a man or a woman, explain whether or not you would have enjoyed living in this time period.

Using the fourteen-line format, write your own love sonnet. You might employ one of the customary rhyme schemes of Elizabethan poets, or you can create your own rhyme scheme; regardless, a clear pattern must be present. Your topic can be any kind of love⬜love for a pet, a parent, a grandparent, a friend, or even an object like a car. Then write a one-page critique of your poem. What do you consider your poem's strengths and weaknesses? Explain why you chose your rhyme scheme and whether adhering to it was difficult or easy. Discuss why you chose your particular topic and how you approached the actual writing of the sonnet.

# Compare and Contrast

**1500s:** Henry VIII receives the title □Defender of the Faith□ from Pope Leo X for his opposition to Martin Luther, who is condemned as a heretic and excommunicated. After Luther's death, Pope Paul urges Emperor Charles V of Spain to go to war in Europe in an effort to eliminate Protestantism and reunite the Roman Catholic Church. The Church supplies both money and troops for this war.

**Today:** Religion still plays a substantial role in international politics, but conflicts take place more explicitly between governments, rather than between religious denominations. In some cases, however, fundamentalism and religious fanaticism are linked to terrorism, which has led to the deaths of many innocent people around the globe.

**1500s:** Henry VIII requires all of his noblemen to swear an oath acknowledging that he is the head of the Church of England. Sir Thomas More, Henry's good friend and the lord chancellor, is arrested and later executed when, as a devout Catholic, he refuses to take the oath demanded by Henry VIII.

**Today:** The Queen of England, Elizabeth II, remains the titular head of the Church of England, but an oath acknowledging the monarch as head of the church is no longer required. The Catholic traditions for which Sir Thomas More gave his life remain in place.

**1500s:** During the long reign of Henry VIII, he married six times. He divorced two of his wives and had two others beheaded for adultery. One wife died in childbirth, and the last wife outlived Henry and even remarried after his death. Marriage was complicated for monarchs during this period, since diplomatic treaties played important roles in marriage arrangements.

**Today:** The situation surrounding the divorce of England's Prince Charles from Princess Diana illustrates how much royal marriage has changed. While the infidelity of both partners embarrassed the monarchy, Diana was not arrested, tried for treason, or beheaded. What has not changed since the sixteenth century is the public fascination with the marital choices of the royals.

# What Do I Read Next?

To better understand the sonnet tradition, consider *The Penguin Book of the Sonnet: 500 Years of a Classic Tradition in English* (2001), edited by Phillis Levin. This book begins with the sonnets of Petrarch and Chaucer and has representative sonnets from each century since, including a good selection of twentieth-century poets. Five of Wyatt's poems are reprinted in this book, including Whoso List to Hunt.

*Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works* (2002), edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones, provides a selection of texts by one of the sixteenth century's most important poets. His sonnets were influenced by both Petrarch and Wyatt.

*Edmund Spenser's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Criticism* (1993) takes a critical look at the work of another poet who was influenced by Wyatt.

A good source for sixteenth-century love sonnets is *The Sonnets: Poems of Love* (1980), by William Shakespeare.

To hear William Shakespeare's sonnets read aloud, listen to *Sonnets CD* (1996), narrated by Sir John Gielgud.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese: A Celebration of Love* (1986) presents love sonnets written with a woman's voice.

# Further Study

Fraser, Antonia, ed., *The Lives of the Kings and Queens of England*, University of California Press, 1998.

Fraser's book is a large coffee-table book filled with many color portraits and copies of early English documents. She provides a concise biography of the kings and queens of England, presented in an easy-to-grasp narrative style and arranged chronologically. This book is very useful for digesting basic information about the British royalty.

Guy, John, *Tudor England*, Oxford, 1990.

This book, written in clear narrative prose, gives a historical account of the religious and political events of the Tudor reign. Guy includes discussion of economic and social conditions that were affected by the Protestant Reformation.

Jardine, Lisa, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*, W. W. Norton, 1996.

Jardine looks at the Renaissance as a source not only of great cultural achievement but also of accomplishments in commerce. During the Renaissance, the acquisition of property became an important way to define success; Jardine examines the kinds of property that were acquired□including jewels, rich fabrics, tapestries, and art□and discusses the significance of the accumulation of goods.

Rose, Mary Beth, ed., *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Syracuse University Press, 1985.

This book remains a good source for understanding the diversity of women's lives during the period in which Wyatt was writing. The essays included by Rose explore women's education, women's roles in the church, and women as the subject of men's writing.

Schama, Simon, *A History of Britain*, 3 Vols., Hyperion, 2000-2002.

Schama's three volumes contain many maps, illustrations, and photos as well as a very readable history of Britain; Schama is often described as a storyteller. There is a great deal of information about both the obscure legends of Britain and the better-documented events. Schama includes information about the earliest chronicles of British history, the traditions that govern the nation, and the wars and monarchs that have defined it.

Singman, Jeffery L., *Daily Life in Elizabethan England*, Greenwood Press, 1995.

This book provides many small details about life in sixteenth-century England, explaining how people lived, the clothes they wore, what they ate, and the kinds of jobs they held.

Weir, Alison, *Henry VIII: The King and His Court*, Ballantine Books, 2001.

This is a very readable biography with a great deal of information about the Tudor court and the people who inhabited it. Weir includes several interesting pieces of information about Wyatt's role within the court, making her book an especially good read for fans of Wyatt's work.

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Amussen, Susan Dwyer, ☐Gender Order in Families and Villages,☐ in *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, Columbia University Press, 1988, pp. 103, 117.

Bernard, G. W., ☐The Fall of Anne Boleyn,☐ in the *English Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 420, July 1991, pp. 607, 609.

Daalder, Joost, ☐Introduction,☐ in *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems*, edited by Joost Daalder, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. xi-xiii.

Dasenbrock, Reed Way, ☐Understanding Renaissance Imitation: The Example of Wyatt,☐ in *Imitating the Italians: Wyatt, Spenser, Synge, Pound, Joyce*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, pp. 19, 30, 31.

Greenblatt, Stephen, ☐Power, Sexuality, and Inwardness in Wyatt's Poetry,☐ in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 145-48, 152.

Petrarca, Francesco, ☐Rime 190,☐ in *The Poetry of Petrarch*, translated by David Young, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004, p. 144.

Waller, Marguerite, ☐The Empire's New Clothes: Refashioning the Renaissance,☐ in *Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings*, edited by Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley, University of Tennessee Press, 1989, pp. 169, 173.

Wyatt, Thomas, Sir, ☐Whoso List to Hunt,☐ in *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems*, edited by Joost Daalder, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 7.

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**Introduction**

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's "For Students" Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently

studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals— helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man–the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an "at-a-glance" comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes "The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature," a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

"Night." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the "Criticism" subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on "Winesburg, Ohio." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. "Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition," Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. "Richard Wright: "Wearing the Mask," in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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