

## **The Hind Sir Thomas Wyatt**

BY [SIR THOMAS WYATT](#)

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,

But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.

The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,

I am of them that farthest cometh behind.

Yet may I by no means my wearied mind

Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore

Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,

Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.

Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,

As well as I may spend his time in vain.

And graven with diamonds in letters plain

There is written, her fair neck round about:

*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,

And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

### **Summary**

The speaker of the poem is the poet himself. He tells us that there is a hunting game, and the prey is a worthy hind (female deer). He then tells us that he is no longer including with the chase.

He mentions that his efforts are useless and he is so tired, and that he is now at the last line of the hunting match. Nevertheless, he cannot stop his thoughts regarding the deer especially when she appears before him, so he follows her tiredly. At last he surrenders because he feels that this chase is in vain like to hold the wind in a net.

He tells his colleagues that the match is ended for him because it is fruitless. There is a note written on the collar of the hind which confirms the conclusion of the speaker: "Do not touch me, as I belong to Caesar, and I am wild, though I seem tame."

## **Analysis**

The opening line of the poem is a question which summons the reader to be excited. As the hunting game "was a popular pastime in the court of Henry VIII, this suggests a poem along the lines of Henry VIII's own most famous lyric, 'Pastime With Good Company'". However, the problem that the question in the first line raised is solved when the speaker or the hunter gives up chasing.

Line 3 reveals that the efforts which have been exerted by the hunter are in vain: 'vain travail'. We can conclude that "the poem is an extended metaphor for the end of a relationship". The hunter is now at the last line of the hunting game even though he is still interested in the match. Wyatt uses an enjambment which means breaking a phrase over more than one line of verse, and caesura which means concluding a phrase within the first half of a line of verse, across lines six and seven to "highlight the discord represented by the end of the relationship as he subverts and challenges his own chosen structure."

In line 8, the poet states the concluding line of the octave to emphasize that the chase is useless by using the metaphor of the wind and net. The final sestet begins with line 9 reveals the poet's wish to surrender and informs the other hunters that the chase for them is in vain too.

Line 11 explains why the speaker's "hunt of this 'hind', and that of others who pursue her, is so pointless." The hind's neck is surrounded by a "bejeweled collar", referring in Latin that she shouldn't be touched: 'Noli Me tangere'. This Latin phrase "refers to a phrase spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene in the Bible". Also, another phrase in English tells us that she does not belong to any of the list of hunters but to the king or Caesar: 'for Caesar's I am.' The historical chronicles stated that the Caesar or the king was Henry VIII and the hind was Anne Boleyn. They married but afterwards the queen was accused of adultery and sentenced

to death. The identification between Caesar and King Henry III proves correct because:

**Caesar was, like Henry, a leader early in late teens, a handsome and strong young man and was significant in the political and aesthetic changes and developments of his realm. Both were literate, charismatic and influential. However, other less favorable parallels can be drawn. Both Caesar and Henry VIII incurred huge debt during their respective offices. There were many subjects who were held captive, sometimes executed, on charges of treason. Caesar faced questions regarding his sexuality and his unsuitable choices of women.**

Wyatt implies these allusions for both characters, Henry III and Caesar, because they are emerged out of "frustration and anger".

## **Form**

Wyatt writes this sonnet according to the Petrarchan pattern in the octave and some changes in the sestet according to his creation for the English sonnet. The rhyme scheme is abba abba cddc ee. The meter is iambic pentameter.

<http://www.gradesaver.com/collected-poems-of-sir-thomas-wyatt/study-guide/summary-whoso-list-to-hunt>

brawl

[brawl]

Spell Syllables

- Synonyms
- Examples
- Word Origin

noun

1.

a noisy quarrel, squabble, or fight.

2.

a bubbling or roaring noise; a clamor.

3.

*Slang.* a large, noisy party.

verb (used without object)

4.

to quarrel angrily and noisily; wrangle.

5.

to make a bubbling or roaring noise, as water flowing over a rocky bed.

Origin

hind<sup>1</sup>

[hahynd]

Spell Syllables

- Synonyms
- Examples
- Word Origin

adjective

1.

situated in the rear or at the back; posterior:

*the hind legs of an animal.*

OriginExpand

## [Middle English](#)

## [Old English](#)

1300-1350

1300-

50; Middle English *hinde*; compare Old English *hindan* (adv.) from behind, at the back; cognate with German *hinten*; see [behind](#), [hinder](#)<sup>2</sup>

SynonymsExpand

See [back](#)<sup>1</sup>.

hind<sup>2</sup>

[hahynd]

Spell Syllables

noun, plural **hinds** (*especially collectively*) **hind**.

1.

*Zoology.* the female of the deer, chiefly the red deer, especially in and after the third year.

2.

any of several speckled serranid fishes of the genus *Epinephelus*, found in the warmer waters of the western Atlantic Ocean.

OriginExpand

before 900; Middle English, Old English; cognate with Dutch *hinde*, Old Norse, Danish, Swedish *hind*, Old High German *hintā* (German, Low German *Hinde*)

hind<sup>3</sup>

[hahynd]

Spell Syllables

noun

1.

a peasant or rustic.

2.

*Scot. and North England.* a farm laborer.

Vulgate

[**vuhl**-geyt, -git]

Spell Syllables

- Word Origin

noun

1.

the Latin version of the Bible, prepared chiefly by Saint Jerome at the end of the 4th century a.d., and used as the authorized version of the Roman Catholic Church.

2.

(*lowercase*) any commonly recognized text or version of a work.

adjective

3.

of or relating to the Vulgate.

4.

(*lowercase*) commonly used or accepted; common.

Origin

**Sir Thomas Wyatt**

Sir Thomas Wyatt is credited with making the sonnet popular in England. He is also famous for his feelings for Anne Boleyn, described in the following poem, which refers to Anne as the

deer, and Henry VIII as "Caesar."

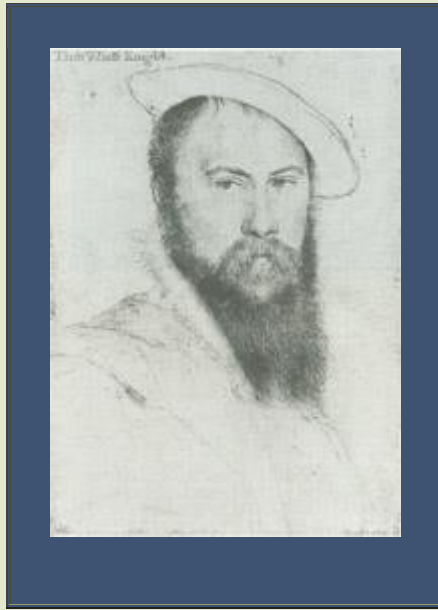
## **"Whoso List To Hunt"**

by

**Sir Thomas Wyatt**

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,  
But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.  
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,  
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.  
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind  
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore  
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,  
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Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,  
As well as I may spend his time in vain.  
And graven with diamonds in letters plain  
There is written, her fair neck round about:  
*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,  
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

- **Whoso list:** whoever wishes
- **hind:** female deer
- **hélas:** alas
- **vain travail:** futile labor
- **deer:** playing on the word "dear"
- **Sithens:** since
- *Noli me tangere:* "touch me not"



Sir Thomas Wyatt

The following message, posted by David Florkow on a university message board, pretty much encapsulates everything I've found on the subject of "Whoso List to Hunt":

"Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 - 1542) is known, if at all nowadays, for introducing the Italian sonnet form (as used by Petrarch particularly) into English usage. Many of his best poems (such as "Whoso list to hunt") are imitations of Petrarch (in this case, most likely Petrarch's 190th sonnet).

"He was a diplomat in the service of Henry VIII, traveling to Italy, France and Spain. Wyatt was imprisoned for his affair with Anne Boleyn, and imprisoned a second time for treason after the fall of Cromwell.

"I like this poem for the way Wyatt expresses personal disappointment and weariness in the great chase, while still admiring a quarry that has both eluded him and is now possessed by a greater man (Caesar). All in sonnet form. The poet tells of his weariness in hunting a female deer (hind). He asserts that he is not giving up, just falling further behind; his wearied mind is still game. But as she continues to flee, he finally leaves off,



recognizing his hunt to be as fruitless as seeking to catch the wind in a net. And he counsels others similarly inclined that they would be spending their time in vain.

Of course, there is more than hunting deer going on here, and the imagery and the vocabulary take a turn for the more personal in the last four lines. For this fleeing female wears around her fair neck a necklace with diamonds spelling out the last couplet of the poem: a phrase from the Vulgate: 'touch me not', for I belong to Caesar (or Henry VIII, as the case may be).

"The wonderful final line captures both the passion and the yoked submission suggested by the diamond necklace, both of great interest to the speaker, who can appreciate both but enjoy neither. David."

Note from Nell Gavin:

The word "fleeth" (meaning "to flee"), used in the sonnet, suggests Anne did not entirely welcome Wyatt's attentions, and some of her contemporaries confirmed it. This is important because Anne Boleyn was found guilty of adultery and executed for it. Thomas Wyatt was one of the men she was accused of having been with, and history has speculated on this ever since. In either event, no one was able to provide substantiated proof that Anne Boleyn ever committed adultery or had a pre-marital affair with Thomas Wyatt, or with anyone else. That one word in this poem might validate her claims of innocence.

