



THE FALCONER: A HEARTLAND TALE

by Darcy Pattison

In the tradition of Tamora Pierce, this fantasy presents a heroine of wit, strength, and savvy.

Britt's only goal is to become a falconer. She steals a gyrfalcon egg in hopes of raising a chick.

But the fierce Zendi, who've conquered the Heartland, appear on her doorstep. She's pulled into their conflict. Their prophecies warn of a Wayfinder and a Bell.

She's just an apprentice Wayfinder. But she's the only one who has a Finding for the missing Bell.

Can Britt and her falcon journey together across the Heartland, Find the Bell and save her people?

This is the story of a falconer, a courageous girl who strides out of the north country and into legend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - The Falconer

1) The book is titled "The Falconer." What did you learn about falcons and falconry? Would you like to be a falconer?

For more: Watch the PBS documentary, "H is for Hawk: A New Chapter."

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/h-is-for-hawk-about/15500/>

2) The main character, Brittney Eldras, faces the loss of her family. Have you lost a family member? Can you relate to how Britt faced it? How did her situation affect you?

3) Britt leaves her home and goes into the wider world in search of the Finder's Bell. Thinking about her journey, were you amused, upset, inspired, bored, angry, intrigued? How did it affect you?

4) Study the map of the Heartland, the mythical country where this story is set. How does the setting affect the story? What places would you like to visit in the Heartland and why? If you wrote a new Heartland story, where in this country would you place it?

5) The Zendi invaders admire albinos. An albino lacks pigmentation in their skin and hair.

Look at photos of albinos. Here's one with 58 photos to start:

<https://www.boredpanda.com/beautiful-albino-people-albinism>

What do you feel when you look at these photos? How do these photos affect you?

In some cultures, albinos are shunned or considered bad luck. But the Zendi consider them good luck and only albinos can be rulers. What does it say about a culture's values when they use skin/hair color to determine a ruler?

6) The three main characters—Brittney, Danel and Oran—are shown on the cover. Did the cover convey what the book is about? If you were making a movie of *The Falconer*, who would you cast for these characters?

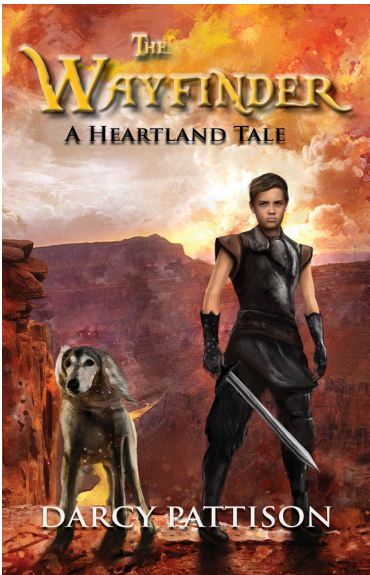
Brittney Eldras, Danel, Prince Oran Ziggmaccus

7) Brittney starts the novel in the far North with her Granfa, but ends the story in G'il Rim. How does she change over the course of the story? Did reading Britt's story help you to understand a person better, or even understand yourself better?

8) Overall, what did you like/dislike about *The Falconer*?

9) What do you think will happen to Britt and the Heartland next? If there was a sequel, what would you want to read about?

10) Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?



THE WAYFINDER

Tamora Pierce meets Rick Riordan in this riveting fantasy that combines the intriguing abilities to Find what's missing with pulse-pounding suspense.

A great loss has frozen Win's heart. But a plague is spreading like wildfire across the Heartland.

Win must use his Wayfinding skills to descend into the great Rift, for beyond it lies the Well of Life. Only its waters will heal the plague.

No one has ever returned from a journey into the Rift.

But the Heartland depends on him.

Can he put his loss behind him and fight for the Heartland?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - The Wayfinder

1) Think about the setting.

How does this setting enhance or take away from the story?

The Rift The setting for the story is G'il Rim, a city which is on the edge of the Rift. Study the Grand Canyon or Copper Canyon in Mexico and compare to the Rift.

Prairie Fires How are most prairie fires started? Explain why fires might be beneficial to prairies.

2.) Think about the characters.

Do the characters seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments? To what extent do they remind you of yourself or someone you know?

How do the characters change or evolve throughout the course of the story? What events trigger such changes?

Winchal Eldras What is a Wayfinder? Explain Win's family structure. How does it affect the story?

The Tazi The dog in the story is similar to a Saluki or an Afghan Hound. How are they similar/different? Why would the author want to invent a dog breed?

Eagles The Rift Eagle is similar to golden eagles. How are they similar/different?

Wolf Packs What is a typical social structure for a wolf pack? How does the wolf pack contribute to the story?

3). Think about the them and plot.



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Discuss how each of the following themes/plots progress in the story.

Friendship (Lady Kala and Win)

The grieving process (see table of contents in book)

Wild vs. tame (Especially for Lady Kala and the wolves)

The power of an individual to make a difference.

4.) Did any parts of the book make you uncomfortable? Why? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought about before?

5.) Did the story end the way you expected?

6.) This is a fantasy story. It's been said that the genre of fantasy depends on setting, mystery depends on plot, romance depends on characters and science fiction depends on ideas. After reading this fantasy novel, do you agree or not? Why or why not?

7.) Bells How are bells forged? Study traditions and stories which involve bells.

8.) Cryptozoology This is the study of "hidden" animals, or animals that people think exist, but no one can prove it. Included in this story are the tatzelwurm and the Tazi.

9.) Would you recommend this book to others? To your close friend? Write a book review and consider posting it on Amazon.com.



SAGE & KING: A HEARTLAND SHORT STORY

Leading a nation is always a family feud.

Zendis, the fierce southerners, have taken over G'il Rim and set their sights on the lush Heartland farmlands. Although Ironstone Soseki, daughter of the Zendi king and the Sage-of-Sages, is thirteen, she still hasn't had a vision. She's Silent.

Her mother's prophecy is that Ironstone will be like a lodestone pointing toward the Zendi nation's destiny. But Silent at thirteen means Ironstone will never be a Sage. She's sent back to the Zendi capital.

Ironstone won't stand for that. Instead, she turns her face to the G'il Bab Mountains and searches for the Pendar Oracle.

She finds destiny for herself, the puppet king, and the Heartland.

DISCUSSION - SAGE AND KING

1) This short story changes the point-of-view to a Zendi character for the first time. How does this deepen your understanding of the Heartland world?

2.) Compare the puppet king and the sage. Which character do you sympathize with? Why? Does this story help you understand THE FALCONER in a deeper way?

DARCY PATTISON - AUTHOR

Storyteller and writing teacher, Darcy Pattison has been a fan of fantastic literature since sixth grade when she read *The Lord of the Rings* and *Ender's Game*. Even then, she wanted to be on the flip side of stories, on the side that creates what others read. She is available for Skype visits with bookclubs.

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