

An American Family Portrait

The Adversaries

by Jack Cavanaugh

STUDENT WORKBOOK

A Christian Historical Fiction Study Guide

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THE ADVERSARIES STUDY GUIDE – STUDENT WORKBOOK
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A Christian Historical Fiction Study Guide
Based on *The Adversaries* by Jack Cavanaugh (An American Family Portrait series, Book 4)

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SAMPLE



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Chapter 1

Tip: Literature is simply the study of stories. While doing this study make it a habit to read each chapter twice. Once just for fun and once while answering the questions. **Remember:** The words in **bold** are important! Review your vocabulary list daily and add new words to it. This will help a lot!

Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was a network or system of homes and churches, even barns, where slaves could find help as they made their way north. The term “underground railroad” is a **metaphor**.

We all know that a railroad is a system of travel with stations along the way where travelers can eat, sleep and refresh themselves. The term “underground” refers to the fact that it was illegal.

Remember, that in the days of slavery, slaves were considered property just like cattle or horses. Aiding their escape was considered the same as stealing. Since it was also illegal to teach a slave to read, they were unable to read directions or a map.

People who operated the Underground Railroad were called “conductors.” The buildings which served as stops along the way were called “stations.” These terms were like a code. This **metaphor** was useful to runaways since most of them had had some experience with trains. This system allowed information to be shared among slaves without revealing their plans to their owners.

Grow Your Brain

Setting up a story is very important. The structure or **framing** of the story helps all the pieces of the story fit together and make sense. You do this when you share a story with someone. For example, if you had a great time at a birthday party you might **frame** your story with “OH, MY GOODNESS! The birthday party at Abby’s last Saturday night was so much fun!” You then proceed to relate the details of the party. You set up or **frame** the story by telling whose party it was (Abby’s), where it took place (her house), when it took place (last Saturday night), while also providing a personal assessment (so much fun!). This is what novelists do to begin their stories. We don’t yet know the characters in this book so the author introduces us to them and gives us some of their past history. This **frames** the story, setting us up to experience the joy, sorrow, trouble and terror they will face (not to mention their epic victory at the end of the story!). It all starts here.

Notice This: When an author wants to illustrate the way a character speaks, they often use grammar and spelling to portray accents or manners of speech. This gives the character a distinct personality. When a reader is **drawn in** to a story this writing style adds to their **mental image** of the character. For example we see the character Cato speak saying, “**We’s fit in ’um. We’s see to that!**” Notice the poor grammar and incorrect spelling? What does that tell us about Cato?

Analyze: Another example of this is found in the character Frank Toombs. What does his pronunciation of, “in-tim-ee-da-tion” tell us about him?



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Runaway

During the Civil War photographs were becoming popular. The photo below is taken of a slave named Gordon.

Gordon was punished by a cruel **overseer**. The beating Gordon received was so severe it left him unable to work for about two months.

While he was recovering from his injury he plotted his escape. In March, 1863 he ran away.

Gordon was **proactive**. He knew he would likely be pursued by dogs, as that was very common. To solve this problem he carried with him onions from the plantation which he rubbed over his body to confuse the dogs.

When Gordon reached a Union encampment at Baton Rouge ten days later he had traveled roughly eighty miles.



This photograph shows the evils of slavery in a way many in the North had never seen. Many were moved to help Gordon and other runaways by becoming a part of the **abolitionist** movement. Some even became conductors on the Underground Railroad.

Think About It: The way you speak, the grammar you use, and whether or not you use slang words or profanity tells others a lot about you. What do you want them to know about you? Would you like to be seen as educated or ignorant? Choose your words accordingly.

Speculate about your word choices. If you appear educated by your speech what benefits might you receive? If you appear ignorant by your speech, do you see any benefit to that? (Remember, **speculate** means to think about the future outcome of an action.)

Cato is a “*middle-aged Negro slave, his back a maze of crisscrossed scars.*” Beating slaves viciously was a common practice in these days. Some men even earned a living doing it! These “business men” beat slaves for an owner who couldn’t bring himself to do it personally. They would bring the slave to such a “business man” or hire an **overseer** to do it.

Did You Notice how the author shows the reader what is happening not only with Marshall Morgan, but also his father, Jeremiah and their family friend, Seth Cooper? Sometimes a chapter can contain more than one scene. As you see in *The Adversaries*, this style is very helpful when **framing** a story which has several **major characters**.

The history of the Morgan and Cooper families goes back to the very beginning of the series when Drew Morgan rescued Thomas Cooper from a vat of blue dye. (You will find that story in *The Puritans*, Book 1 in *An American Family Portrait* series.)

As you read this scene, notice that the author **frames** the story with a history of their friendship, marriages, and the sad story of the death of Jeremiah’s wife and son. **Speculate:** Why do you think the author included this family history? How do you think that will play out in the rest of the story?



The Adversaries

American Family Portrait Series Book 4

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Did You Know? Slaves often tried to escape slavery. However, without someone who was already free to help them, many were not successful and were severely punished with beatings, starvation, and other forms of torture. Free people who worked to end slavery and to help free slaves were called **abolitionists** because they wanted to **abolish** the slave trade.

Activity: Abraham Lincoln is a famous **abolitionist**, but there were many others. Many **abolitionists** were former slaves who had escaped to freedom. Do some research: Can you locate at least three former slaves who worked to **abolish** slavery?

Think About It: Toombs and Marshall have very opposing views of slavery. Each character represents views that were held by many Americans during the Civil War. Some Americans believed the Bible supported slavery; others believed the Bible to be soundly opposed to slavery. Many families were divided on this issue; brothers, cousins, and other relatives fought on opposite sides of the war.

Analyze: Why would anyone believe that the Bible supported slavery? If you lived during this era, would their arguments make sense to you? Why or why not?

Take Away: It is extremely important to use **critical thinking** when studying what you believe and why you believe it. **Thinking and reasoning** skills are extremely important. Without them you will be easily persuaded to believe some wild and crazy things. Today's technology encourages many opinions and stories which are posted on social media sites and other sources. You must decide what you believe to be fact and what you don't. The choices you make are extremely important as they affect not only you but also others in your family. We see the decisions made by Jeremiah and Seth affected their entire families and the long-held friendship between them. During your lifetime there will be many financial decisions and political issues on which you will need to choose a side. If you know how to **analyze** information and opinions, use **critical thinking** and **thinking and reasoning** skills, you will be better able to make good life decisions.

Discussion Questions

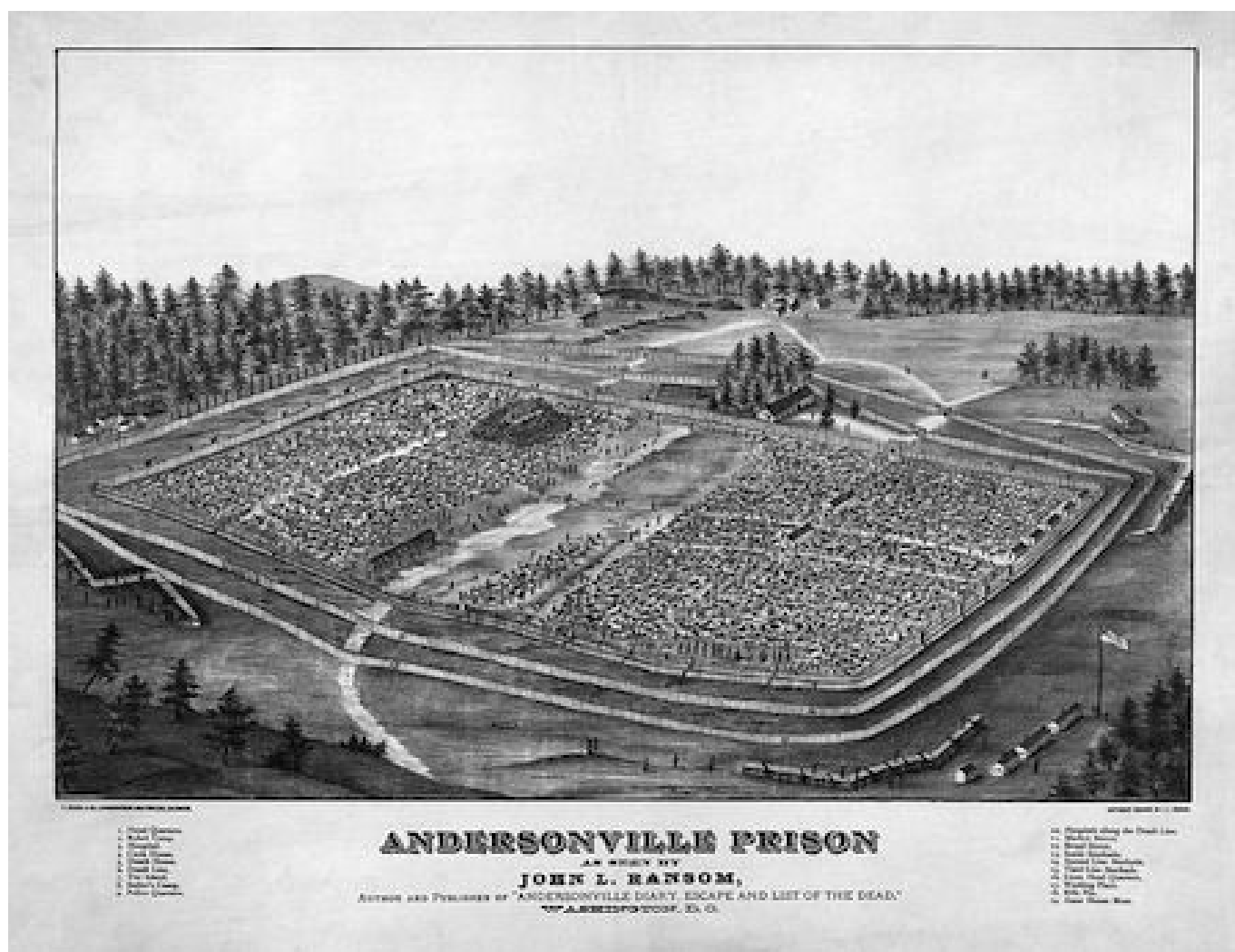
1. Why do you think the slaves stared at the "unusual birthmark" on Marshall's head?
2. The author uses **imagery** to let the reader know that it was very hot. What words and sentences convey the temperature to the reader?



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