

# READERS' GUIDE

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Over the course of *The Micah Judgment*, Hays Sutton attempts to remedy the disastrous and terrifying chain of events that began when he agreed to hide the terrible secret of the golden skull. Through the many challenges Hays and others face, he ultimately confronts this evil and his own fears. Hays' friends and associates all encounter aspects of Hays' faith in action, and from their observations of these actions, each draws a different conclusion about what it is to be Christian. As you review the following questions, think about your own beliefs and how you live them out through your actions.

1. In the prologue of the novel, the young Hays thinks he has failed a test of bravery by shutting his eyes when an opponent rushes at him during a baseball game, causing him to lose the game. How valid was Hays' youthful self-assessment at the time? In what ways does such a memory affect his future? Are there similar memories and/or humiliations in your past that prevent you from finding peace today?
2. Roberta Dannel, Hays' newly hired assistant, becomes the pawn of Ayman Qal Atwah. When does she realize that she is being manipulated and controlled? Why does she allow that to happen? Most people have elements in their lives that exhibit control over them without logical explanation. What are yours?
3. Hays promises Tom that he will keep Tom's secret, even though Tom acknowledges he acquired the artifact illegally. How would you have responded to such a request from a friend? How did Hays justify his actions? Which if any of his reasons makes sense

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to you? When is it proper to keep a secret like the one Hays keeps for Tom?

4. Both Hameed and Fadhil are world-class villains. What did you find most surprising about each one? How would you describe the moral code each one followed?
5. In chapter 6, Hays says that because he became a believer, he had to end his relationship with Norah. What arguments could you make to support Hays' decision? What arguments might suggest he was wrong? Hays does mention that he tried to share his faith with Norah and she refused to accept it. Did Hays fulfill his obligation as a witness to Norah? How does his decision regarding Norah seem to affect Roberta?
6. After the lab is broken into and robbed, Hays makes a decision to track down the people who committed the crime. Hays acknowledges that he and Duffy will have to break laws in their pursuit of the wrongdoers. When, if ever, does the proper course of action for a believer allow for breaking the law? At what point do you consider it a Christian duty to resist or break a law? What Scriptures support your answers? If Hays and Duffy are doing the right thing, why doesn't God make a way for them that doesn't make it necessary for them to break the law?
7. Hays continues his silence even after Tom has died. How do you think he could fully justify his risking other lives in order to stay out of trouble? How does Hays demonstrate his wrestling with his decisions and actions? How do our wrong choices catch up with us even when we are vindicated or forgiven for them?
8. Norah is by all appearances a strong, independent woman. How does her behavior toward Hays support or contradict this image?

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Norah continued to believe that Hays loved her even after their breakup. Why are some romantic relationships able to convert to genuine friendships while others are bitter? How might things have turned out differently had Hays continued a relationship with Norah?

9. As Hays and Duffy travel through Iraq and Iran, they are kept from harm or discovery several times by what appears to be miraculous intervention. In what ways do you think God intervenes in our lives? How often are miracles truly miraculous and how often are they the result of good planning, coincidence, or “luck”?
10. When Norah was being tortured she recalled the words that Hays had told her about Jesus and faith and some of the books she had read. What were some of the barriers that prevented Norah from believing in God? At what point do you believe Norah came to have faith in God? Initially, Norah had a very limited grasp on the truth of God; how true or real can a conversion be under these circumstances?
11. Roberta tells Norah she has done many bad things. How did your perception of the extent of Roberta’s wrongdoing compare with her own? When Roberta is trapped in the burning isolation unit, she calls out to Hays and says that she hopes that this one good thing will make up for all the bad things she has done in her past. How does your own belief and understanding compare with Roberta’s statement?
12. Some of the evil characters were killed at the end of the story; some remained alive and relatively unpunished. Why do you think God allows evildoers to remain unscathed at times while the “good” are harmed or lose their lives? What more, if anything, should Hays have done to expose Huber/Loss’s complicity in releasing the virus?