



Child of the Mist ***These Highland Hills – Book 1***

By Kathleen Morgan
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Reader Guide / Discussion Questions

1. Anne is introduced as an independent spirit who bucks convention to do what she feels is right. Do you agree that she should continue to practice her healing arts even in the face of criticism and danger to herself and others?
2. Alistair MacGregor gave his daughter Anne to Niall Campbell largely as a way to save face and maintain his and Niall's honor. What do you think about the men's agreement? What would you have done in Anne's situation?
3. Niall and Anne have their own reasons for disliking each other, yet they both seem to yearn for real love and acceptance. Do you think an arranged union such as theirs is doomed to failure? Do you think arranged unions are harder or easier than those brought about solely by mutual love and attraction? Would you have stuck it out for the year and a day that was promised in the handfasting vows they took?
4. Once in Castle Kilchurn, Anne is judged and found wanting by most of the Campbells, some because of the rumors of her witchcraft and others because of ulterior motives. How do you think she handles the cold reception? How would you have reacted?
5. Iain's attraction to Anne and his desire to keep her safe seems admirable. Does this attraction justify spending time alone with her and embracing her? Was Anne wrong to lead him on? Do you think Niall's anger was justified?
6. Anne's relationship with Caitlin starts off very badly. Have you ever joined with another family, whether through marriage, adoption, or as a new stepchild or stepparent and had to navigate the complicated waters of acceptance? What struggles did you face? How were you able to overcome them? What do you think still needs to be worked out?
7. Despite many warnings, Anne plants her herbs and visits with Ena to learn more about healing. Later, this association causes harm to Ena, Niall, and even in some ways to

Nelly. Is Anne then culpable in any of the imprisonment, torture, poisoning, or death? Why or why not?

8. Throughout the book the question of who is the real traitor is raised. Who did you suspect and why? Were you right? When did you know for sure who it was?
9. What is the difference between Malcolm's religious views and Anne's? Which is the true Christian in this story? Can you think of any modern incarnations of this very old conflict between the sometimes opposing ideas of grace and judgment?
10. Many women in the past were persecuted as witches who were most likely regular women who used herbs for healing or lived eccentric lives. Do you believe witches really existed or exist today? If so, what is the difference between what Anne and Ena practiced and what a witch might practice? Do you believe in homeopathic and herbal remedies today? Why or why not?
11. Even if Anne and Niall do manage to overcome the dangers they face and find a true and lasting love, do you think Anne could ever really be accepted by Niall's clan? What will it take from both Anne and Niall, and his clan, to accomplish this? Do you think Malcolm is and will continue to be a threat? If so, why?

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