

# THE HEALER'S DAUGHTER

## FOREWARD

I would love it if you would consider *The Healer's Daughter* for your next book club discussion group. I promise you that the novel will foster lively conversations and perhaps some soul-searching in the participants. Some may even walk away with a different perspective on certain issues, be it the place of women healers in history, the mother-daughter relationships, the weight of honor and duty, and the role that legacy plays in our chosen destinies.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Which is your favorite and least favorite character in the book? Did your opinion of this character change at the end of the story?
2. Were you able to relate to the protagonist, and how?
3. Was the romance between Naida and Ambrose believable to you? Why or why not?
4. How did you feel about the couple's chemistry and compatibility? Did you root for them or not?
5. How did the setting and time period of the novel affect their romance? Did it enhance the atmosphere or pose challenges for the characters?
6. What did you think of the reason that prompted Ambrose to leave so abruptly? Was it realistic or contrived? What do you think happened to him after he returned to London? Would he be happy?
7. Naida is one woman in a long line of healers who sacrifice love to put their magical skills at the service of the sickest. Could you imagine having a loveless life? Is there any more selfless sacrifice?
8. The existential question: Nadia hopes to be free from who she's expected to be. Can anyone possibly be? Must she follow our destined path, or does she have the right to choose otherwise? Can she reconcile both?
9. To what length would you go in order to keep the past from dictating your future?
10. Naida has to choose between love and legacy; which is more important? If you had to prioritize, which would come first?
11. What was the most satisfying or disappointing part of the story, and why?
12. During the 17th-century witch hunts, people hunted and burned any suspicious women based on their beliefs and way of living. Are people today more paranoid or less than in the late 1600s? Is our world less or more hostile than it was in the Middle Ages?

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13. Do you believe that the age of witch hunts is over today?
  14. How did the author blend historical facts and fiction in this book? Did you find the novel accurate and authentic?
  15. Did this book challenge or change your perspective on the historical events of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century? Did you learn anything new or interesting about the setting and period? Did it make you want to learn more about it?
  16. If you could travel back in time to the 17th and 18th-century American colonies, what kind of woman would you be, and what would you do?
  17. How did this book relate to your own life experiences or interests in the present day?
  18. How did you feel about the ending? Was it satisfying, or did you wish for something else?
  19. How does this book compare to other books by the same author or in the same genre?
  20. If you could ask the author one question about this book, what would it be?

## POSTSCRIPT

The Healer's Daughter was a three-year-long labor of love. The idea came while living on the shores of South Carolina's Lake Hartwell, and I stumbled upon a video by Greg Wilson titled "Hartwell Lake's Ghost Island: Rich in History." ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyPIMkV\\_bho](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyPIMkV_bho))

The ghost of Cemetery Island captivated and intrigued me. How did a young girl travel from Massachusetts to the Carolinas in the late 1600s? Was it by boat or on foot? How did she survive in such a harsh and brutal world? How did she end up on an island that didn't exist then? For months, I explored countless websites, blogs, and libraries, spent hours examining historical maps, and uncovered a thousand and one answers.

Sadly, researching those times from a colonial female perspective was challenging; most historical works were written by and about men, with women's mindsets often ignored. These gaps made me even more determined to tell Naida's story. As an immigrant myself, though I was older when I came to America, I drew on my own experiences and everything else Naida herself whispered to me. As the story developed, I fell more and more in love with her. I hope you did too.