

Discussion for Book Clubs

The Secret Hamlet

Book Club Leaders ... contact Brian and/or Judith to participate in a special meeting to discuss the book; the concepts; and the evolution of the series. We always encourage readers to post individual reviews on *Amazon.com* and we thank you.

In-person author visits are possible if you are in Colorado. Otherwise, Zoom is always an option.

Did *The Secret Hamlet* pull you in? Did you want more?

- Were you satisfied or disappointed with how it ended?
- How do you picture the characters' lives going forward?
- If you were to identify the most important theme within *The Secret Hamlet*, what would it be?

Do you have a favorite part(s)?

- What was it?
- Were you surprised with its reveal?
- Would you like to see more reveals in the next book, *The Secret Rise*?

Do you have a favorite character?

- Who?
- Why?
- Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about him or her?

What do you think of Nichol's ability to defend herself and others?

- Do you know anyone like her?
- Do you think that there are women like her today?
- Do you think it's important for a woman to be able to physically defend herself?

Was it right for Nichol to listen to the duke's meetings without the other's knowledge?

- Why do you think she didn't tell him what she was doing?
- If he had known earlier, would he have forbidden her to do so?
- Once the duke invited Nichol to listen and watch, do you think he will place too much responsibility on her?

What risks did Nichol undertake as she fled from Paris with Timo's warning?

- Should she have left Ezra and Helene's home as suddenly as she did?
- Should she and the others have disguised themselves?
- Was she right to think the priest was behind it?

Could a young woman in the year 1000 be a merchant, mother, and confident of a future queen?

- How can the two women stay in contact when a country will separate them?
- What could Queen Emma do for Nichol?
- Will men seek to destroy Nichol's presence?

Duke Richard wants Nichol's guidance. Should she give it?

- Should Nichol trust the duke?
- How could Nichol and the hamlet create an alliance with the duke?
- What danger could Nichol bring to the hamlet and to her family?

Would you offer unconditional help to another as Nichol did to Marie and Cara? Have you ever had to ask a stranger for help?

- What fears could asking for help generate?
- What is the likelihood that adequate help would appear?
- What risks did Nichol and Robert take when they agreed to raise and support another infant?

When Nichol slayed the men in the forest, was it the Lady guiding her actions?

- Did her actions and skills surprise you?
- Should she have let the men take the lead in protecting the travelers?
- Should she have risked throwing the dagger?

If Nichol didn't have the voice of the Lady as a support, comfort, and guide, would she have succeeded in her quest?

- Was the Lady real or part of Nichol's imagination?
- What would she have done if the Lady wasn't real?
- Did the Lady always have good intentions for Nichol?
Could she turn against her?

When Nichol first met Garlyn, he was caustic. Should she have been cautious?

- When did Garlyn accept her as a spokesperson for Harmonie?
- Could Nichol have garnered his support sooner?
- Will Garlyn be able to get those in No Name to support the Harmonites?

What themes surfaced in the story?

- Have you ever been in a situation where you needed someone to save you?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you did not want someone to save you?
- Have you ever had to step in and help someone out of a dire situation?
- Have you ever had to overlook or accept something so that you could have a relationship with someone?
- Have you ever had to trust someone you barely knew?
- Have you ever offered to help another you barely knew?
- Have you ever allowed yourself to cut off others you knew well because you felt they had become bad?
- Have you ever had inner voices and feelings that guide you?

www.HarmonieBooks.com

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