

WITCHING MOON

Teacher's Guide

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About The Book

Once every eon, when the earth eclipses the moon on a winter's solstice, an immortal is born under a witching moon. Anne has always had the strangest feelings—memories she couldn't place; strangers she inexplicably yearned for. After she rescues the enigmatic Phillip from a shipwreck, her comfortable life on the island of Cusabo is shattered, and the mystery of her destiny starts to fall into place. Anne leaves behind the life she has always known and sets out with Phillip on an arduous journey to Amaranth, where her ancient family awaits her. But the path is dark and daunting, and Anne's powers have only just begun to manifest.

Author's Note

I chose to begin *Witching Moon* in March 1865 for multiple reasons. First, I wanted Anne to have started life in the lowcountry of South Carolina, an area that I know and love. Growing up in the marshes, she would have an understanding of nature, horses, gardening, fishing, and to some degree, root doctoring. Second, I needed a war. Since immortals want to blend in with society, immortal septs cannot wage war with each other out in the open; they must battle each other within mortal wars. The American Civil war was a good fit. Although I needed a war, I wanted it to be in the background. *Witching Moon* is about Anne coming of age, and finding her place in the world. America was in chaos in 1865. The idea that Anne would leave her relatively peaceful life on Cusabo island and jump into the chaotic world beyond was interesting to me. Everyday, we are like Anne; we all leave home and enter a chaotic world.

Themes

Persistence

Family

Courage

Kindness

Leaving Home

Friendship

Coming of Age

Native American Trails

Underground Railroad

American Civil War

The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers)

Perseverance

Lowcountry

Cusabo Indian Tribe

Time Period: 1865

The thirteenth amendment passed on January 30, 1865, abolishing slavery. Abraham Lincoln, who was in his second term as president, was assassinated at Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865. Confederate general, Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union general, Ulysses S. Grant, at Appomattox courthouse on April 9, 1865. The war moves west to MS, AL, LA, and TX. In what ways is the American Civil war represented in the book?

Railroads: East coast railroads were used to transport goods, but many lines had been destroyed in the south by the Union army. The Union army used a technique called "Sherman's neckties," where the railroad iron would be heated until it could be bent, usually around a tree, therefore rendering the rail useless. Since iron was in demand in the south, railroad destruction was difficult to repair.

Telegraph: Used for long distance communication.

Types of food eaten: People ate what they could grow, forage, or kill. Restaurants were few and mostly located in cities. What do Phillip and Anne eat while they are traveling north? What does Anne eat aboard the Echo?

The Underground Railroad: An interconnected system of secret safe houses and routes used to transport enslaved people to freedom. On page 142, Phillip tells Brewster that he "Has a friend following the North Star," What do you think this means? Why does Phillip feel the need to speak in code? In chapter 31 Anne and Phillip spend the night in the cellar of a church on the Underground Railroad. What role did churches play in the Underground Railroad?

Quakers

Quakers, a Protestant Christian denomination, believed, that all human beings are created equal and worthy of respect. Quakers abhorred slavery and aided fugitive slaves. In Chapters 26-31, Phillip and Anne are housed by Quaker tobacco farmers. In what other ways have Quakers been activists for social justice?

Geography

Native American Trails: As native American populations grew and tribes traded and blended, thousands of miles of interconnected trails were forged across the USA. The Natchez Trace, the Great Wagon road, and the Cherokee Path are a few examples of these old wilderness roads. Many of these old trails are now scenic byways. In chapters 19-24 Phillip and Anne travel along an old American Indian trail. Can you find examples of old Indian trails in your state?

Underground Railroad Routes: Enslaved people took many different routes to attain freedom. They traveled over land and water, north to free states and Canada, and south to Mexico. Using a map, can you trace the different paths of the Underground Railroad? Do any of the Underground Railroad routes cross through your state?

English / Creative Writing

Narration:

Who is narrating?

Types of narration: First person, Second person, Third person (limited and omniscient).

Character Arc:

The inner journey of a character, the change a character goes through. Does the character mature?

Change? Regress?

Stages of Anne's Character Arc:

1. Motivation: Anne feels that something in her life is missing. She rescues Phillip, who tells her she is immortal and has a sister waiting for her at Amaranth.
2. The quest: Anne decides to leave Cusabo and journey to Amaranth with Phillip.
3. Exploration/ Trial: Anne and Phillip travel north and encounter Elodie, slave catchers, and Rex.,
4. Obstacle: Anne is kidnapped by Rex and forced on a ship bound for Rotterdam.
5. Resurrection: With the help of Rory, Anne escapes her prison and fights Resolution: Anne makes it to Amaranth and Rowan.

Characterization:

Direct vs. Indirect

1. Direct Characterization is when the narrator tells the reader about the character. Example: Anne had long black curly hair and blue eyes.
2. Indirect Characterization: We find out about Anne through her speech, thoughts, interactions with other characters, her reactions, and feelings. Can you find examples of direct and indirect characterization in *Witching Moon*?

Plot:

The foundation of the story.

1. Introduction (Anne lives on Cusabo island with her blended family).
2. Rising action (Anne rescues Phillip and discovers she is immortal. She travels north, but is kidnapped by Rex. She Fights Rex, but is imprisoned by the captain of the Echo. She escapes and makes her way to France).
3. Climax (Anne lands in Saint Malo, France and is confronted by the Samurai, she has proved herself a fighter and she and Rowan are reunited).
4. Falling action (Anne and Rowan go to Amaranth where she heals Phillip).
5. Resolution (Anne meets Bello at Amaranth, but chooses Phillip and to forge her own path).

Authors note:

In my original drafts of *Witching Moon*, I thought the climax of Anne's story was her fight and escape from Rex aboard the *Echo*, but I was wrong; in that scene Anne was merely proving that she was capable of saving herself. The real climax is when she lands in Saint-Malo and must now face the Samurai with Rowan just out of reach, and Momo coming to her aid. It took several drafts for me to realize that the real climax involved women helping women. So often in our society women, and men, beat each other down, when we should be lifting each other up. My belief is that we should all succeed together. It does me no good to wish you worse, I want to wish you well. The message is: We only grow stronger if we stand united and love one another.

I am cheering for you to accomplish your goals and dreams. I want you to be happy, healthy, and successful.

Vocabulary

talisman

hoodoo

hex

solstice

papyrus

confederate

aura

bile

pneuma

armistice

sphincter

amaranth

oracle

Gaia

Phanes

scabbard

siren

charlatan

shod

guttural

armoire

gnash

mutiny

persistence

perseverance

What is the difference between persistence and perseverance?