

She followed her heart around the world,  
to find her way home

# A CURIOUS DAUGHTER

JULES VAN MIL

Reading Group Notes

# BLURB

Joy Meredith has the world at her feet.

She has just turned eighteen, is starting a vet science degree and has defied her mother by moving to her own place in the city. She has a boyfriend and a job at the local pub. Her future seems set.

Then, Joy meets Mick Harris. Charismatic, talented and wild, Mick is the lead singer in a band that is going places – fast.

He is everything Joy’s life is not.

When they head to the dizzying lights of London in the 1980s – and an intoxicating whirlwind of gigs, stardom and modelling – the past begins to overwhelm Mick and the cracks erupt: in Mick, in their relationship, and in Joy’s own life.

As things fall apart, Joy has to follow her own heart around the world to find her way home.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jules Van Mil is passionate about being creative. Her career spans education, fashion design, styling and writing. Her debut adult novel *A Remarkable Woman* was published in 2022. In her spare time she loves to paint mixed-medium abstracts and to kayak. She lives in Sydney with her husband.

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# DICUSSION QUESTIONS

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE, THESE QUESTIONS CONTAIN SPOILERS \*\***

1. The prologue takes place in Melbourne in 1994, after the events of the novel. Who did you think had died? Did you have any inkling what the secret undertaking was that Avril Montdidier raised in her meeting with Reece? Why do you think the author chose to open the book with this scene?
2. The author, Jules Van Mil, uses two quotes from Shakespeare to introduce the two parts of *A Curious Daughter*. Did you find these fitting? How do they align with the novel?
3. What qualities does Joy Meredith have that make her the curious daughter of the title? Is she representative of her generation? If so, why?
4. Are there other 'curious' characters in the novel? If so, who are they, and why?
5. After her first relationship with Hugo, Joy enters a relationship with Mick Harris, a very different kind of man, a musician with a dark past. How, if at all, has Joy changed in the years she was going out with Hugo? Do you think things might have been different if she'd met either man at a different time in her life?
6. How does Jules Van Mil portray the natural world in this novel – around Monaghan Station, in England and in France? What impression do you gain about the landscape, the climate, and the way life is in each of these locations; how do they differ from one another?
7. Joy is the daughter of Avril Montdidier, a towering figure in the dressmaking and fashion industries. Have you read *A Remarkable Woman*, in which Avril's story is told? How does the Avril of *A Remarkable Woman* differ from the Avril we see – mainly through Joy's eyes – in *A Curious Daughter*?
8. Joy and Mick come from very different backgrounds. While Joy is aware of this, she doesn't fully appreciate the lingering effect Mick's childhood and teenage years has had on his life and his ability to 'fit in' to her world. What are some examples of this? Do you think this affected their relationship?
9. The mental health issues Mick experiences after the traumatic loss of his girlfriend and daughter haunt him throughout this novel. How do these impact his relationship with Joy and his own ability to regulate his emotions and mood? What prevents him from seeking help, do you think, and what repercussions does this have on his life?

10. Although Hugo is a good match for Joy on paper, she is never able to love him as she loves Mick. What do you think is the reason for this?
11. Joy's riding accident changes her life forever. What do you think might have happened if she hadn't had the accident? How does it change the course of her future?
12. Which female character did you connect with the most, and why?
13. Which male character did you connect with the most, and why?
14. At the close of the book, we return to the meeting between Avril and Reece in Melbourne and we become aware of who has died and what decision Avril, Tim and Joy have come to about Monaghan Station. What do you think of this decision? Do you agree with the outcome?
15. If you could have dinner with any three characters in *A Curious Daughter*, who would you choose, and why? And which setting would you prefer to visit, Monaghan Station or Chateau de Vinieres?