And the Hills Replied is the story of one man's longing to discover his roots and how those roots quite literally draw him into the distant past. During a 2005 Scottish sojourn, Sparhawk unearths a forgotten chapter of his family history—one that links him to Elizabeth DeBurgh, a long-suffering queen of Scotland and the second wife of Robert the Bruce. Elizabeth co-narrates the story of the immediate family of King Robert I, "the Bruce of Scotland," and their struggles to fend off annihilation by the mightiest king on earth, Edward I of England. The novel recounts the events leading to the treaty of Northampton in 1328, the terms of which declare Scotland an independent nation and her husband her rightful ruler.

Beginning in the early medieval period, during which Elizabeth experiments with time travel, the plot proceeds to Robert's seizure of the Scottish throne in 1306 and his role as devoted guardian of his daughter Marjorie. Knowing that her husband's contested claim to the throne will enrage her father's best friend, King Edward I, Elizabeth fears that she will be doomed by her husband's insolence.

Elizabeth relates her sad story—including her seven-year house arrest in England while burdened with the safekeeping of Marjorie and a mysterious infant named Thomas—from the perspective of an abandoned wife and mother. Sparhawk offsets this gloom by providing historical context from a contemporary point of view, and in the process turns Elizabeth into a legendary figure. Sparhawk narrates Robert's victory over the English in 1314, while Elizabeth recounts her postwar reunion and reconciliation with Robert. Although tragedy strikes once again, Elizabeth's absolution following a miraculous act of love with Robert later in their lives heralds a future in which their children will thrive and, in the case of young David, rule Scotland as did his father before him.

The 1326 ending of *And the Hills Replied* eloquently brings closure to this intricate tale, blending history and imagination.