



Book Club Questions
The First Witch of Boston by Andrea Catalano

1. Maggie voices her thoughts openly and does not conceal her thoughts or expertise, despite the risks it presents. Do you believe it's more important to remain authentic, or should individuals like Margaret have chosen silence for their safety? Why?
2. Does Maggie understand the danger of her outspokenness, and if she does, why does she continue to act freely? Is her defiance an act of courage, self-deception, or something else?
3. What does the novel suggest about the costs women face when they refuse to diminish themselves?
4. People who loved Maggie knew that her sharp words and honesty put her in danger. Why didn't they try harder to protect her? Was it because they respected her, were afraid, or felt sad about the idea of silencing her?
5. Do you think the community truly feared Maggie's abilities, or was their reaction all about keeping women in their place? How do you feel about how the townspeople treated her?
6. Thomas hides parts of his past and struggles to be honest when it could put his family at risk. Is it acceptable to protect your family instead of being truthful, or should honesty always come first? How would you have acted in his place?
7. The Widow Hallett uses lies to undermine Maggie, who strives to be fair. Is it ever understandable or right to pretend to be someone you're not to survive in a harsh society? Why do you think Widow Hallett did this?
8. Many people in the town ask for Maggie's help, but they quickly blame her for witchcraft when it suits them. Why do you think people can turn against someone so easily? Are there examples today where society treats outsiders or experts this way?
9. Alice risks being accused herself to defend Maggie, while many others stay silent out of fear. Would you have helped Maggie, or would you have played it safe like many did?
10. In Puritan Boston, being seen as religious often matters more than actually being good or kind. Do you think it's more dangerous for a society to care about appearances over real values, or can strict rules help people behave better? How does this compare to modern life?

Discussion questions by PrincetonBookreview.com