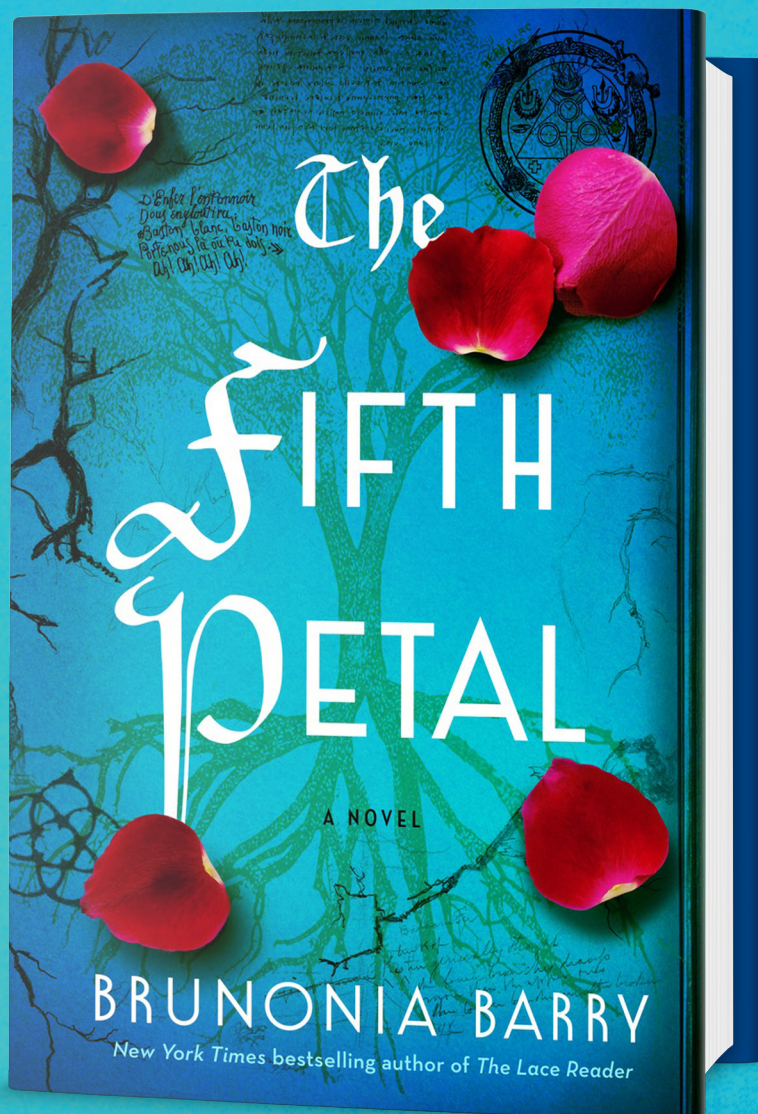


# The FIFTH PETAL

BY BRUNONIA BARRY

BOOK CLUB KIT



@BrunoniaBarry



/Brunonia-Barry

CROWN



## BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

### The FIFTH PETAL

1. Contemporary Salem is a safe haven for neo-witches, greatly enhancing the city's tourist trade, but there are many who want to "ditch the witch." Could a modern-day witch hunt happen in Salem again, and, if so, what might it look like? Are witch hunts happening in other parts of the world?
2. "You know who you are, you have always been other," Rose writes in her *Book of Trees*. In what way is each character in the book "other"? Rose later claims every culture, and every individual, harbors a prejudice against those they consider "other." Do you agree?
3. Callie longs for a home and family, and particularly for a mother figure, after having lost her own mother at a young age. How does Callie fulfill that dream, and at what cost?
4. Is the banshee a goddess or a monster? Its power seems to reside in a woman's raised voice. How does that power manifest in the hands of the different characters?
5. At one point in the story, Rose tells Callie not to "court the strike." What does she mean, and why is this important to the story?
6. Social media is both a resource and a curse in the novel. The wealth of available information helps Rafferty with his case, but the opinions of anonymous posters condemn Rose, mirroring Salem's accusers of 1692. Discuss the positive and negative impacts of social media.
7. Brunonia Barry, who lives in Salem, is often surprised by the generational guilt the city still suffers for the 1692 witch hangings. In what ways does this manifest in the story?
8. Sound and vibration figure in *The Fifth Petal*, with a capacity to both hurt and heal. How does the banshee's killer sound relate to vibration and music therapy? How does the music of the spheres that Callie hears during meditation relate to the ancient music heard in Matera?
9. Religion played a huge role in 1692 Salem, as did misogyny and fear of the unknown. Discuss Rose's quote: "Tell me what you want, and I'll tell you who you think you are. Tell me what you fear, and I'll tell you who you really are."
10. Trees symbolize both the interconnectedness of all life and the roots of humanity in this story. How does the sacred oak help Rose, and what is the significance of the *Tree of Life*? What does it mean to Callie in her translation of Rose's *Book of Trees*?



## SALEM MAP LOCATIONS

### The FIFTH PETAL

**PROCTOR'S LEDGE:** Boston Street. Recently verified as the real location of Salem's 1692 witch trial hangings. A 2017 memorial is planned to commemorate the innocent victims.

**SALEM WITCH TRIALS MEMORIAL:** Liberty Street. Behind the Burying Point Cemetery. A serene spot where tourists gather to see memorials dedicated to each of Salem's innocent victims.

**SALEM COMMON:** A town gathering spot and center of Salem Common Historic District.

**EVA'S LACE READER TEAROOM (FICTIONAL):** Across from the Salem Common. Business is located inside the mansion that was left to Towner Whitney. Callie lives upstairs when she first returns to Salem. Rose's oak tree sits in the courtyard. Towner and Rafferty live in the coach house behind the mansion.

**HAWTHORNE HOTEL:** Washington Square. Historic hotel mentioned in the novel. Sits across the common from Eva's Lace Reader Tearoom.

**SALEM WITCH MUSEUM:** Washington Square. Across from the common. Salem's most visited museum.

**STATUE OF ROGER CONANT:** Across from the Salem Witch Museum. A much-photographed statue of Salem's founding father that tourists often mistaken for a witch.

**SHOP OF SHADOWS (FICTIONAL):** Pickering Wharf location of Ann's witch shop and Mickey's pirate shop. Though both stores are fictional, there are many witch and pirate shops in the area. Ann's shop was inspired by Artemisia Botanicals at 3 Hawthorne Blvd.

**DERBY WHARF:** Site of Eva's boathouse and historical center of Salem's shipping trade. Ann's coven sometimes performs spells at the end of the wharf which extends far into Salem Harbor. Also the site of *Friendship of Salem*, a replica of a 200-year-old sailing vessel.

**ROSE'S HOUSE (FICTIONAL):** Daniel Street. House on Salem Harbor where Rose lived with the Goddesses; now fallen into disrepair and condemned. Stands out among the pristinely restored homes of the Derby Historic District.

**CHESTNUT STREET:** Eleanor Roosevelt dubbed it "the most beautiful street in America." Part of the historic McIntyre District where Helen Barnes lives. Also the route of the witches' Halloween candlelight vigil and the site of Phillips House's pirate party.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



## SALEM MAP LOCATIONS (CONTINUED)

### The FIFTH PETAL

**GREENLAWN CEMETARY:** 57 Orne Street. Historic property. Burial site of Callie's mother and the other Goddesses.

**CUSTOMS HOUSE:** Derby Street. Historic site across from Derby Wharf. Nathaniel Hawthorne worked here as a clerk.

**THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES:** Turner Street. Historic harborside property made famous by Hawthorne's novel. Open to the public.

**THE WITCH HOUSE:** 310 Essex Street. Historic landmark and the home of one of the judges from Salem's witch trials. Open to the public.

**THE SALEM ATHENAEUM:** 337 Essex Street. Membership library. Cultural center founded in 1810. Collection features 50,000 volumes on diverse topics. Open to the public.

**ESSEX STREET PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY:** Center of Salem's Halloween celebration. Visitor's Center, PEM, and the Heritage Trail.

**PEM:** 161 Essex Street. World-class Peabody Essex Museum. One of Salem's cultural centers. Features an extensive maritime collection and Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese House.

**SHOP OF SHADOWS (FICTIONAL):** 95 Margin Street. Rafferty's workplace and the jail where Rose is briefly held.

**SALEM WILLOWS:** Old-fashioned mini amusement park at the end of Fort Ave. Adjacent to the Victorian enclave where Rafferty owns a rental fixer upper. Features Skee Ball, chop suey, sandwiches, and the best popcorn anywhere.

**YELLOW DOG ISLAND:** May Whitney's home and site of the shelter for abused women and children. Towner grew up here.

**PRIDE'S HEART (FICTIONAL):** Route 127, Pride's Crossing, Beverly. The Whiting mansion. Largest and most elegant property in Pride's Crossing. Callie lives there after leaving Salem.



## RECIPES

### The FIFTH PETAL

The recipe Emily's family has always used for Lobster à la Newberg goes back through the generations, and was originally from *Fannie Farmer's The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* written in 1896.

Here is the recipe as it was written in the cookbook:

#### Lobster à la Newberg

2 lb. lobster	1 tablespoon brandy
Slight grating nutmeg	Few grains cayenne
¼ cup butter	¼ cup thin cream
1 tablespoon Sherry	Yolks 2 eggs
½ teaspoon salt	

Remove lobster meat from shell and cut in slices. Melt butter, add lobster, and cook three minutes. Add seasonings and wine, cook one minute, then add cream and yolks of eggs slightly beaten. Stir until thickened.

Serve with toast or Puff Paste Points.

---

#### Cocktail Recipe: Death in the Evening

This is the absinthe punch that was served at the fundraiser for Ann's Witches' Educational Council. It's a slight variation of a cocktail that Ernest Hemingway called "Death in the Afternoon" (after his book). Hemingway advised caution, to sip slowly. Our characters in *The Fifth Petal* would have been well-advised to pay attention.

**Add to punchbowl:** 4 oz. iced champagne and 1½ oz. absinthe for each drink. Mix until absinthe reaches a milky greenish opalescence. Serve in punch glasses and sip very slowly. Hemingway recommended 3-5 drinks apiece; we recommend one.