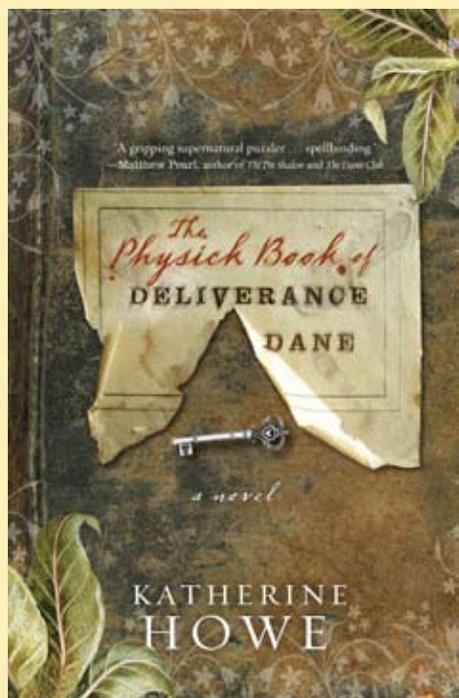




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PREVIOUS SELECTIONS INCLUDE:

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Spencer Quinn

PRAYERS FOR SALE
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An Antique Key. A 17th-Century House. A Mysterious Book of Spells.

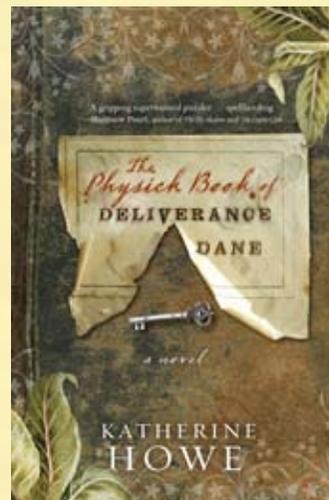
"Have you not considered the distinct possibility that the accused were simply *guilty* of witchcraft?"

Connie Goodwin thinks her academic advisor is teasing her; she has mastered the scholarship surrounding the Salem witch trials of 1692 and knows the question he poses is preposterous.

She never suspects that answering it will alter everything she knows about the past, her family, and the professor himself.

Interweaving two narratives, one set in 1991 and one set three centuries earlier, Katherine Howe's debut novel is a marvel of invention and historical reconstruction. The author employs her training as an historian to vividly depict the realities of 17th-century Salem, dramatizing the plight of the unfortunate victims as they fall prey to the mania of their accusers. But it is the leap of imagination by which she connects Connie to that distant past that turns *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* into a bewitching reading experience.

Sent by her mother to prepare her long-deceased grandmother's home for sale, Connie finds a decrepit dwelling filled with venerable oddities, including a collection of ancient bottles filled with peculiar liquids and powders. On her first night there, Connie chances on a crumbling bit of paper, bearing the words "Deliverance Dane," that has been carefully hidden inside a key tucked between the pages of a 300-year-old family Bible. Combing the local church registry for traces of this mysterious name, Connie strikes up an acquaintance with Sam, a steeplejack engaged in the church's preservation. Together



they piece together Deliverance's tragic story and learn of her precious book of spells and recipes for healing potions. When a series of sinister events threaten Sam's life, Connie's search for the book is transformed from scholarly pursuit to a matter of life and death—and love.

With breathless suspense and emotional sympathy, Katherine Howe guides readers between past and present as she reveals the discoveries of Connie Goodwin and the secrets of Deliverance Dane, condemned as a witch in the Salem hysteria. Told with conviction and thrillingly paced, this extraordinary first novel proves Howe's command of what may be the greatest sorcery of all: that of the consummate storyteller.

An Excerpt from *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*

At the moment that these idle thoughts wandered through her mind, the hand that was holding the Bible vibrated with a hot, crawling, pricking sensation—something between a limb falling asleep and the painful shock that comes from unplugging a frayed lamp wire. Connie screamed in pain and surprise, dropping the heavy book with a thud.

She rubbed her hand, the strange sensation so fleeting that after a moment she doubted she had ever really felt it. Connie knelt to see if she had damaged the antique book.

The Bible lay open on the floor, raked by the glowing light from the oil lamp, surrounded by a rising cloud of dust stirred by its fall to the carpet. Kneeling on the floor, Connie reached forward to gather up the Bible when she noticed something small and bright protruding from between its leaves. Nudging the lamp nearer, Connie traced her fingertip down the edge of the pages until she found the little glimmering object, and then slowly withdrew it from its hiding place.

About the Author

"To the people who experienced the Salem panic," writes Katherine Howe in "Real Witches, Real Life," the postscript to her novel, "the trials were *really about witchcraft*. Everyone involved—judges, jury, clergymen, accusers, and defendants—lived in a religious system that held no doubt whatsoever that witches existed. . . . When I started thinking about the story in *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*, I decided to take the Salem villagers at their word for once: what if witchcraft was real?"



Like her protagonist Connie Goodwin, Howe is a student of American and New England history, and she drew on her training and research skills to accurately render the 17th-century world of Deliverance and her family, devoting special attention to details of dress and room interior. In addition to her scholarly interest in the subject, Howe's ancestry drew her to the subject of the Salem witch trials: she is a descendent of condemned witch

Elizabeth Howe, who was executed, and accused witch Elizabeth Proctor, who survived.

Katherine Howe is completing a Ph.D. in American and New England Studies at Boston University, and currently lives in Marblehead, Massachusetts with her husband and assorted animals. *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* is her first novel.

Get the most out of *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* with these reading group discussion questions.

1. The story follows several sets of mothers and daughters: Connie and Grace, Grace and Sophia, Deliverance and Mercy, Mercy and Prudence. How do these mother/daughter relationships differ from one another? How are they the same? Did you identify with one set more than the others?
2. Most of the main characters in the novel are women. How have women's roles changed from the 17th century to the 20th century? What about their obligations and opportunities?
3. As an historian, Connie likes to interpret the past in light of the present. Sam, however, is a preservationist: he likes to keep the past intact, sometimes at the expense of the present. How are their opposing feelings about the past made apparent? Would you classify yourself as an historian or a preservationist?
4. How do some of the buildings, such as Saltonstall Court, the Harvard Faculty Club, and the Milk Street House, function as characters in the story?
5. Discuss the role of Arlo in the novel. Does he share characteristics with the "cunning folk" in Connie's past?
6. What role does religion play in the novel? Is Christianity contradictory or complementary to magic in this story?
7. Do you think magic, as represented in this book, exists in the real world? If so, how does it manifest itself? Do we use different terms to describe it today?
8. Deliverance has a chance to escape with her daughter the night before she is put to death. Why does she make the choice she does?
9. *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* is the latest in a long line of books about witchcraft in Salem. Why do you think we're still so enthralled by this moment in history? What does Salem have to teach us about our culture today?

Further Reading:

THE HERETIC'S DAUGHTER by Kathleen Kent

THE DEVIL IN THE SHAPE OF A WOMAN: WITCHCRAFT IN COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND by Carol F. Karlsen

A MIDWIFE'S TALE: THE LIFE OF MARTHA BALLARD BASED ON HER DIARY, 1785-1812 by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Praise for *The Physick Book Of Deliverance Dane*

FROM THE CRITICS

"Spellbinding, vividly detailed, witty, and astutely plotted.... A keen and magical historical mystery laced with romance and sly digs at society's persistent underestimation of women."

Booklist (Starred Review)

FROM OUR BOOKSELLERS

"*Deliverance Dane* has everything: a memorable story, a fresh historical perspective, unforgettable characters, and a spark of magic! Bewitching!"

Karen Schafroth, Des Peres, MO

"Howe hit the perfect balance between spine-tingling thriller and thoughtful questioning of the Salem witch trials. I couldn't, and didn't, put it down."

Doug Britt, Chicago, IL

"Read this book and feel history being rewritten."

Sandra Guerfi, White Plains, NY

"I devoured this book! An academic mystery for fans of *The Historian*, *Garden Spells*, *Possession*, or Anne Rice's Mayfair books."

Rosey McArdell, Apple Valley, MN

Praise for Previous Barnes & Noble Recommends Main Selections

"Heartbreaking...Past meets present, long-buried family secrets, manipulation at its most malicious. This riveting tale of a stolen life, told through three voices, will keep you reading all night and remembering for weeks."

Lynn Oris, St. Louis, MO

on The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox

"A sweet story that adds hope to the world, and gives us the assurance that goodness and selflessness can still be found in our daily lives."

Patty Rogala, Birmingham, AL

on Garden Spells

"Grab a hammock and some lemonade and enjoy this tale of love, hope, and friendship. A great treasure for all book lovers."

Margie Turkett, Annapolis, MD

on The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

BARNES & NOBLE
RECOMMENDS

— *The Physick Book* —
of Deliverance Dane

Publisher Price \$25.99

B&N Price \$18.19

Member Price \$15.59



Start Your Own Reading Group

Ask a bookseller for our free guide,
or visit www.bn.com/recommends.

Share the Experience Online

Watch a video with Katherine Howe and join our discussion at
www.bn.com/recommends.

**Join Us for Events
in Barnes & Noble Stores**

Look for the announcement of reading group discussions in select stores
around the country at www.bn.com/recommends.

Prices effective through 7/06/09.