



### Discussion Questions: *Everyone Knows Your Mother Is a Witch*

#### “Words, Words, Words” Book Club—October 2021

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? Are there any passages that stuck out to you?
2. Which characters were your favorites? Were there any you with whom you identified, or any you wish had gotten more attention? Galchen shows us a number of Katharina’s relationships—with Simon, her children, Chamomile, and a variety of neighbors. Who do you think Katharina would consider her closest ally? Her most serious nemesis?
3. The story of Katharina’s experience is interspersed with testimony and letters based on historic documents. What did you think of this narrative device?
4. The historical moment of this novel saw communities wrestling with significant shifts in religion and science as well as the turmoil of encroaching war. To what extent do you think this environment encouraged belief in and persecution of witchcraft?
5. What do you think drove Ursula to accuse Katharina? Do you think the matter would have been dropped if Katharina hadn’t recorded it? What do you think of Katharina’s decision making during her experience? Are there things you think she should have done or not done?
6. Simon wrestles with himself as to whether he could have done more to help Katharina. Could he have? What do you think of the decisions he made?
7. The phrase “everyone knows your mother is a witch” is repeated throughout the book. Why do you think the author chose to consistently return to this phrase?
8. Johannes Kepler is a well-known scientific figure, yet you could conceivably read this book without recognizing him. What do you think of the author’s decision to distance Johannes from the story?
9. How does Katharina compare to other characters you have come across in books, movies, or TV who are associated with witchcraft? Is there anything about her as a “witch” that surprised you? Does this representation of “witch” follow any other traditional stories? What set it apart?
10. Think about the reasons Katharina was accused of being a witch. How would the elements of her “witchcraft” be viewed if they were practiced today?