



Discussion Questions: *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*
"Words, Words, Words" Book Club—October 2020

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? Are there any passages that stuck out to you?
2. Witchcraft is defined in many ways throughout the novel. How do you think Tituba views herself and her powers? Does she identify as a witch? What might this word mean to her? What are the different cultural connotations that shape the significance of this word?
3. Although Tituba is a real historical figure, Condé invented nearly all of her story. Why do you think she made the narrative choice to have Tituba voluntarily leave her home and her independence to join John Indian?
4. Throughout the novel, John Indian frequently comments to Tituba that an enslaved person's first duty is to survive—which Tituba views as a spiritual, moral, and personal compromise. Whose side are you on? Is life worth living on its own merits, even if it is subject to some kind of oppression, or is only a free life worth living?
5. Maryse Condé originally wanted to title this book simply: *I, Tituba*. What do you think the added term "Black Witch" is referring to? What role does her dark complexion play in how she is viewed and treated by the communities in which she moves?
6. Many characters—some real, and some fictional—weave in and out of this narrative. Who were your favorites? Who else do you think deserves their own "biographical" tale?
7. Why do you think the author chose to include Hester in the story? What purpose does this literary crossover serve?
8. Tituba's relationship with the dead is fluid and ever-present throughout the novel. Do you think this part of her supposed "powers" or is this something more personal?
9. Condé gives Tituba many lovers—which relationship served her the best? The worst?
10. Tituba is acutely aware of how her story will be lost to time, and she will be reduced to that one footnote: "*Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'*" Why does Condé keep coming back to this point? Are you reminded of other pieces of similarly forgotten history?