

Marlborough Public Library Adult Book Club

September 12, 2023

*Hour of the Witch* by Chris Bohjalian

Questions from: <https://www.penguinrandomhouseaudio.com/discussion-guide/645425/hour-of-the-witch/>

1. The Puritans believed that they were always in the presence of God or the Devil—that they were never truly alone. How did the characters' behavior reflect, or not reflect this belief? How would you behave differently if you felt there was always someone watching?
2. The Puritans used God and the Devil to explain the inexplicable events of everyday life. It is suggested that having this type of explanation is comforting. Do you agree?
3. Mary often wonders if she herself has been possessed by the Devil or if, instead, it is God influencing her actions. How does this inner dialogue change your view of Mary's motives?
4. Were you surprised by the way the Puritans in the novel lived? How did their lifestyle differ, or not, from any ideas about Puritans you may have had before reading this book?
5. Discuss Henry Simmons' actions throughout the novel from his first encounter with Mary, to the kiss in her parents' dining room. Do you approve of his behavior? What about Mary's?
6. As you were reading, who did you think buried the objects in the ground outside Mary's door? Were you surprised by the answer?
7. Was justice served at the end of the book? Did the characters get what they deserved?
8. In what ways does Mary's story resonate today? Has society progressed in its treatment of women, in its views on divorce and domestic violence?