

# The Fifth Sacred Thing by Starhawk - ACAB 3/25/18

## The City & its Structure

1. Meetings play an important role in the process of the city and the plot of the book. What do these meetings have in common with our own political meetings? What would you do differently in this context? What can we learn from their process?
2. The city has become isolated from other parts of the resistance like The Web. What can we learn about movement building from their role? Is it important to build an island like the city or should we focus outward?
3. The central question the city faces is how to defend itself. What do you think of their solutions? Can we apply their tactics today?
4. Many times during this book collective process blocks individual autonomy. What does this mean for the community of the city? What are the pros and cons of valuing the collective over the individual?

## Relationships & Ritual

5. Family lines and heritage are part of each character's development. Do you see family lineage as a tool for resistance? How do your own family ties inform your life?
6. Religious ritual plays a role in the political struggle of the city, from the down to earth herbs of healers and witches to the supernatural visitation of the prophet Elijah to the mystical bee colony. What role does religion play in our communities? How is religion empowering or disempowering in the book?
7. Romantic relationships shape our central characters. What do you think of their free love in the city? How does that contrast with our society?
8. Madrone is repeatedly faced with a choice between life and death. It takes great strength for her to choose life. What does this tell us about hope versus despair? How does the book handle martyrdom and self-destructive heroism?

## Other ACAB books

9. There's a stark contrast between Ursula K. Le Guin's Annares and Starhawk's the City. How is the culture different? What are the priorities of each (ambiguous) utopia? What do you like or dislike about each attempt? How is the division of labor better or worse in each?
10. All about Love reminds us that self-actualization and relationships crucial for justice. How does the culture of the city exhibit love as an important value? What about their love and respect for the 4 sacred things?