

In the know

All things Knowlton Literary Festival

www.knowltonliteraryfestival.ca



Festival Dates: October 15–17, 2026

Jennifer Chevalier will be at the Brome Lake Community Centre (270 Victoria, Knowlton) in the afternoon, on Saturday October 17, 2026, to discuss her career in journalism and her debut novel: *The Winter Witch*.



Jennifer Chevalier

Jennifer Chevalier worked for several years at the BBC in London before moving home to Ottawa where she is currently the showrunner for CBC Radio's long-running weekly political affairs program, *The House*. The journalism and documentaries she's led have won a Gracie, several RTDNAs (Radio Television Digital News Association of Canada), and a CAJ (Canadian Association of Journalists) Award for investigative journalism. She lives in Ottawa with her husband and two children.

She can be reached at: jennifer.chevalier@cbc.ca.

Filles du Roi

Filles du Roi translates to "King's Daughters." These women were a group of approximately 800 young French women who were sponsored by King Louis XIV to immigrate to New France (what is now Quebec) between 1663 and 1673. At the time, the colony was heavily populated by men (fur traders and soldiers) with a massive gender imbalance. The King sent these women to promote marriage, encourage families, and populate the colony. Most were young, poor, single women or orphans recruited from urban centers in France. The French Crown completely paid for their travel to the New World, provided a hope chest filled with clothes and sewing supplies, and often granted them a dowry. The program was highly successful. Because of the resulting population explosion, an estimated millions of people of French-Canadian descent today trace their ancestry back to one or more of these women.

THE WINTER WITCH

"I was utterly enchanted by the *Winter Witch*," — Amy McKay

Two sisters set sail on a bride ship from Normandy hoping to leave a curse behind them and find better lives in the wilds of 17th-century Quebec, only to meet a mysterious witch who forces them to confront the truth about magic—and their past.

Élisabeth Jossard boards a bride ship to New France with her sister Marthe, forced to start a new life after a scandal in her village in Normandy. She's harbouring a dark secret and hopes that by coming to Montreal—the holiest place in the world, she's been told—the saints will hear her pleas and lift the curse that plagues her.

When Élisabeth's prayers go unanswered and she is unable to banish the spirit she believes is tormenting her, Marthe encourages her to turn to a powerful witch for help, the enigmatic stowaway Jeanne Roy. But Jeanne has secrets of her own, and when she refuses to help, Élisabeth's resentment kindles a dangerous fire.

Inspired by the tales of Canada's Filles du Roi, *The Winter Witch* examines how lies, arrogance, and ignorance can lead to witch hunts in any society.

