

In the *Motherland Fort Salem* world, witches are just... a thing. They've been known to have magic for hundreds of years, if not longer – and they refer to their magic as Work. Like, when they are doing Work, they are doing magic. And their power comes from their vocal chords. Essentially, witches genetically have extra vocal chords that allow them to sing or hum different “seeds” that do different magical things.

Witch/magical lines are all passed through maternal lines. So, if your father is a witch, it won't necessarily mean you are, but if your mother is, you will be. Because of that, witch society is heavily matriarchal (awesome).

In the late 1600s, Sarah Alder was born a witch, and living somewhere in Europe (unspecified, technically, but I have a few theories). Her parents were brutally murdered by witch hunters, and she and her sister fled to “the new world,” settling in Salem, MA.

Then, the witch persecutions started there as well, and her sister was hung in front of her. Sarah was about to be hung, herself, and from the trauma of it all, she released a seed that was more powerful than anything else... historically, ever, resulting in a storm that terrified and amazed people. Due to that, she was offered a deal – essentially, she would stop being persecuted by officials/governments/militias, *if* she formed the official American military and signed an accord that all witches henceforth would have to join the military.

Sarah was only 17/18 herself at this point, and, like, what other option is there when presented with this? You and all of your fellow witches can be hunted and executed or... not.

So, she signed the Salem Accords into law, and she has fought in every war since.

While she was fighting one in the early 1700s, she returned to the coven she'd formed in Salem... to find them all having been brutally murdered by witch hunters, known as the Camarilla. She, in turn, built Fort Salem and personally hunted down all of the Camarilla to try to protect the rest of witch kind.

When she reached her forties, she made a deal with the Chippewa people – she would protect their land, in exchange for an ancient Chippewa magic... one that could keep her young, technically, as she feared what would happen to witch kind once she was gone. This magic is why Sarah is still alive and looking fine as fuck at ~340 years old.

Essentially, when she starts aging, a young witch sacrifices her youth, and that youth goes to Sarah, while the ~20 year old witch is then ~70. That witch lives out the rest of her days, like 6-10 years, as an elderly woman, now referred to as a “biddy.” Sarah has 7 biddies, so at any given point in time, she has 7 witches who sacrificed their youth for her to remain the general. More than that, it's seen as an honorable thing to do. And when one dies, the next witch (who has volunteered and has been preparing to be a biddy for a few years) takes her place. They follow Sarah around and are mentally and emotionally connected to her. She can communicate nonverbally with them, and she doesn't have to eat, because she is sustained from the biddies eating, etc.

As you can imagine, Sarah has got Some Trauma. Fighting in like >80 wars, losing everyone she has ever cared about, having to make some fucking hard choices... she has some serious walls up.

<https://twitter.com/talderfilms/status/1562078181896642561>

that is a GREAT edit, honestly, for a quick download on Alder's character.

Now, we have Tally Craven.

As I said, every witch has to join the military, and when they do, they report to Fort Salem for Basic Training. Tally's mother was granted a dispensation (excused) from having to join the military when she was young, as she was the youngest of five Craven sisters, and all four of her older sisters died in service of the military. Therefore, she was granted an allowance not to join, so she could carry on the Craven line. She, understandably..., dislikes the military, and moved to a matrifocal compound – a place in *Fort Salem* canon, where all-women live in a peaceful community.

Tally (as her mother's only daughter, therefore the only Craven witch left to carry on the family line), was also granted a dispensation that her mother fought for, so that Tally could avoid going into the military as well. So, Tally, unlike many of her peers, actively made the decision to join.

Reason being – in the beginning of the show, we see that there are a rogue group of witches who are killing civilians, called the Spree. They essentially are witch terrorists. Like, they go into shopping malls and do Work to make hundreds of civilians kill themselves. They are the main focus villains of the first season.

Tally is just... kind of a ray of human sunshine and she wants to do the Right Thing, so she answers the call and chooses to join the military, in spite of having a dispensation, to help fight against the Spree. She views it as an honorable thing to do, in spite of where she grew up.

A cute little character study for Tally –

<https://twitter.com/caroldenvrs/status/1564979877702471686>

So, Tally is extremely pro-Sarah, thinks she is brilliant and brave, and loves being at Fort Salem, loves forming this bond within her unit (with Abigail and Raelle, the other 2 girls she is put into basic training with. Their backstories all vary – Raelle is a gifted Healer, who is very much only at Fort Salem (in the beginning) because she has to be. Abigail is from a long line of very powerful witches, the Bellweathers, and she has very much been preparing and ready to join forever).

Tally's journey in season 1 is really about her becoming somewhat disillusioned with the military, less naive, and learning more about how things aren't as black and white as they seem. She discovers that she has a very powerful penchant for Knowing/Sight.

Witches can basically all do general Work –seeds and magic that everyone learns, as well as learning hand to hand combat (and they fight with these metal whip things called scourges). But there are specialties like weather Work, which Sarah is gifted at, and Fixing (healing), and Knowing (being able to See things in the world around you that aren't in your line of vision or visible to the basic human eye, and a little bit sometimes into the future, too) that some people are gifted at. Tally ends up being one of the most gifted Knowers at Fort Salem in decades.

This comes into play when, toward the end of s1, she and her unit end up being forced to stop a Spree terrorist attack, where the Spree put bombs on these trucks, that are heading into the city. Their orders are to basically blow the bombs up before they can reach the city... only Tally is able to see that the Spree put 20 civilians inside of the truck as an insurance policy that the military wouldn't kill them. She informs Sarah of this, feeling conflicted about having to blow the trucks up... but Sarah essentially decides that having to kill 20 civilians is better than what happens when the bombs hit the city and potentially kills hundreds. Thus, she orders the unit to continue on the mission, killing the civilians (Tally is the only one who can see them/knows that they are in the trucks).

So, she becomes really disillusioned with Sarah by the end of s1. Which doesn't lend well to the fact that in the final episode of the season, Sarah enlists Tally's unit to accompany her on a mission to rescue a group of people (the Tarim, who are a group of very rural/separate witches who live in the mountains) from a group of people persecuting them.

On this mission, Tally – who is so... sweet and plucky but is also so BOLD – confronts Sarah (you know, one of the most powerful people on the planet, and commander of the entire army) about her orders during the Spree mission.

Sarah, naturally, responds with, “I don't owe you answers.” ... but then she turns around and gives a great speech that essentially tells Tally, “you have no idea what I have had to see and experience, you have no idea the hard calls I have had to make, so you don't get to morally judge what you can't understand.” Which... does pacify Tally and make her really think about the intricacies of morality.

At the end of the mission, they end up getting attacked, and one of Sarah's biddies dies. Sarah then starts to rapidly age and is going to die, because she needs a new biddy. Tally, ever the valiant soldier, tells Sarah, “Take me.”

So, Sarah does, which saves her life and give her the strength to be able to get everyone the hell out of dodge, escaping the attack. Sarah becomes 40 again, while Tally ages to 70.

At the beginning of season 2, Tally is a biddy. She's mentally and emotionally connected to Sarah... but Sarah makes her a deal. Since Tally wasn't ever supposed to become a biddy (typically they have several years of preparation for the enormous physical/mental/emotional changes), Sarah offers to reverse the process for Tally. The woman who was in line to become the next biddy will actually take up that mantle, and Tally will get her youth back.

Tally agrees, and becomes her normal self again. Which *should* mean that their connection is severed. Only, it isn't. Tally starts dreaming Sarah's memories, feeling her feelings and wartime experiences as she sleeps. Because they are CONNECTED

[youtube.com/watch?v=jQ4TC1zICi0&list=PLzqg-aeIpmF0t6pCyUPsQrkaZL7O5i0aC&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ4TC1zICi0&list=PLzqg-aeIpmF0t6pCyUPsQrkaZL7O5i0aC&index=8) this scene happens after Tally becomes un-biddied... and it is what got this ship SAILING.

All right, that's essentially everything you'd need to know if you want to read my fic but haven't watched the show!

Oh, something canon that I reference in my fic – to ensure that witch lines remain strong and secure, because if a witch has a baby with a non-magical man, it means that the magical line is going to be... diluted? That child will likely still be a witch, but then if THAT child has a baby with someone who isn't magical, even less of a chance, etc. So, in witch society, they have this woman who is called the Imperatrix, who is essentially a matchmaker. It plays a little role in the fic