

Discussion Questions

1. Lotty was very young and naïve in the past timeline, and her choices reflect that youth and naïveté. What choices might have adult Lotty made in place of her younger self? Could those choices have saved her from the life she was forced to live?
2. In the book, Lotty talks about living on the edge of a knife; a woman who balances between two worlds. In what ways—both obvious and metaphorical—does Lotty live on the edge of a knife? Are there comparisons to be made between her own experiences and the powder keg that was brewing between the Irish and the English?
3. Tureaud enjoys keeping to the tenets of traditional Irish storytelling—where no character is either fully bad or fully good. Were there exceptions to this important structural component in *Beneath, It Sleeps*? If so, what were they? Which characters were fully “bad” or fully “good”?
4. Though the Hellfire Club was a very real, worrisome, and debauched organization, it’s long been placed on a pedestal by the paranormal investigative world (likely due to its steady production of supernatural events in most of its confirmed locations), and it has been “Disney-fied” in pop culture (e.g., it was directly referenced in Netflix’s hit show, *Stranger Things*). However, the Hellfire Club became the blueprint for many similar secret societies throughout the centuries, and Tureaud chose to not include many of their practices in this work. Were you aware of its existence before reading *Beneath, It Sleeps*? Whether yes or no, can you draw comparisons to any current events to strengthen the author’s intent: the past continually repeats?
5. The Red Thread of Fate is a concept that most associate with the folklore of Asia, but it’s also ingrained in Irish folklore. There’s a saying: what is meant for you will find you. Though many disbelieve in the idea that some things in this life are pre-destined, Tureaud takes that Red Thread of Fate to present several plot points that the reader might not have seen coming, but upon re-reading, the breadcrumbs leading to those twists are quite obvious. Were there any shocking moments for you while reading?
6. On the other hand, Tureaud leverages another element of traditional Irish storytelling in all her work: the idea that humans, though they can see what’s coming, will always make the same mistakes. Were there any moments that struck you as predictable?
7. Having read the book, and upon reflection, can you mull over some of the more predictable moments to understand their importance? Tureaud’s prose is purposeful, and so are her choices. Why do you think she made those choices?
8. In Irish culture, when it comes to the supernatural, the “how” isn’t important. This is another deviation from Western (mostly American) storytelling, where everything needs to be explained and make sense. The supernatural doesn’t make sense, and that’s the point. In Ireland, if you’re not supposed to walk through a field at night or disturb certain areas, the “how” of Bad Things Will Happen if you do doesn’t matter. Tureaud utilized this facet of Irish storytelling in *Beneath, It Sleeps*. Did you need the “how,” or were you as satisfied as Lotty with the end result?
9. The púca is feared in Ireland because of its unpredictability. You never know if it will bring good or bad to your door ... and you never know what form the shapeshifter will take when you come face to face with it. Are there any folkloric creatures in your country that are similar? What are you supposed to do when you come face to face with those creatures?

10. In the context of “Ms. Whalen’s wits” being taken, it’s clear that Lotty believes that might not be entirely true. This is a purposeful device that’s meant to convey an underlying current to the reader; a current that is easily missed, and meant to portray Irish culture on the page as opposed to being a thematic cog that makes or breaks the plot. Ms. Whalen’s wits weren’t the only instance, as we see it again in the past when Lotty is overwhelmed by impending death, deception, betrayal ... and the hope that maybe there’s still a future for her and William. What were you able to glean from these devices? What importance can you assign to them?