

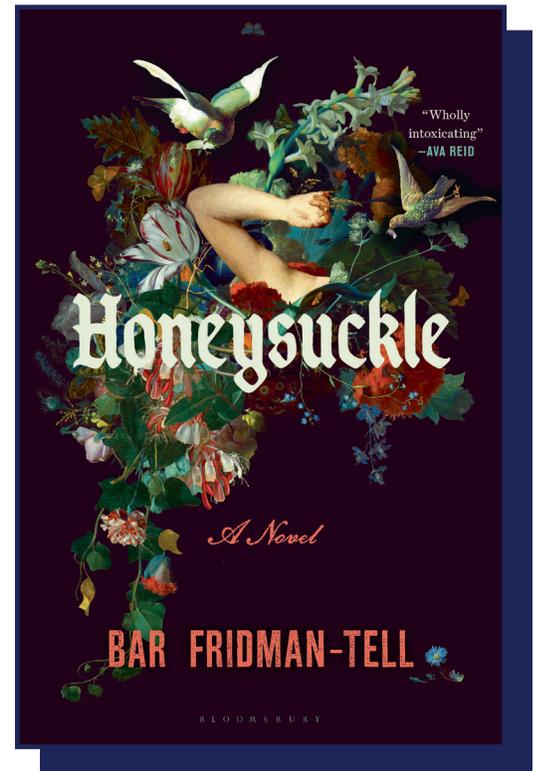


Honeysuckle by Bar Fridman-Tell

Questions for Discussion

Please note: Some of these questions contain spoilers.

1. When you first read the prologue, what did you think was happening? After finishing *Honeysuckle*, why do you think the author chose to start the novel in this way?
2. Part One begins with a quote from *The Mabinogion*, a collection of eleven stories from early Welsh literature. Had you heard of this collection, or the story of the Blodeuwedd, before? If so, how did this affect your reading of the novel?
3. When you first met Rory, Wynne, and Daye, what did you think about them? Did your opinions about them change as the novel went on?
4. When Wynne is explaining to Rory how to “transition” Daye during the seasonal shifts, she says, “There needs to be some continuation from season to season in the Blodeuwedd . . . Reusing the same core structure, repeating specific combinations of perennial plants. Like our bodies can replace skin and hair—and cells, for that matter—but remain the same body.” How did you see these themes of renewal and constancy explored in different ways throughout the novel?
5. Why do you think the author decided to write chapters from both Rory’s and Daye’s perspectives? How did this affect your reading experience?
6. In Chapter 19, Daye explains that she didn’t have words to describe what “unbeing” felt like, and “how little suited she was to Rory’s version of language. How her fluency ran only skin deep. Her mouth, her hands, her thoughts, all suited for understanding, not expressing.” How does language—in its many forms—play a role in the story, and how does that role change over time?
7. When Daye discovers Rory’s experiments in the shed, she says that all that separates her from them is “shape and goodwill.” Do you agree?



8. In Chapter 32, when Rory and Daye first kiss, they hear a nightingale sing. Why is this choice of bird important?
9. Birds start to appear more and more in Daye's chapters. What do birds represent in this story? What do they represent for Daye?
10. In Chapter 42, Rory explains to Elliott that honeysuckle is used as a bonding agent, bonding a construct with its creator. How did learning this inform your understanding of the novel's title?
11. In Chapter 44, Wynne has an argument with Rory about whether Daye is able to say no to him. Did this conversation about consent change how you felt about Rory and Daye's relationship? Do you think Daye had any real agency in her life?
12. Do you think Rory did the right thing by giving Daye a voice without getting her permission to do so? How did Daye change after gaining a voice?
13. What did you think of the ending? What do you think will happen after the last scene to Daye? To Rory?
14. Did you consider the ending a happy or a sad one for Daye? And for Rory?

Recommended Reading

The Mabinogion (*Oxford World's Classics*) translated by Sioned Davies

The Mabinogi by Matthew Francis

Weyward by Emilia Har

The Bear and the Nightingale by Katherine Arden

Annie Bot by Sierra Greer

The Last Tale of the Flower Bride by Roshani Chokshi

"Florilegia, or, Some Lies About Flowers" by Amal El-Mohtar (in *Seasons of Glass and Iron*)

The Chronicles of Prydain by Lloyd Alexander

Daughter of the Forest by Juliet Marillier

The Owl Service by Alan Garner