

Book Club Questions  
Starling House by Alix E. Harrow

1. How does Opal define home at the beginning of the novel and in the closing scenes? What would it have taken for the lodgings provided by Bev to feel like a true home?
2. Despite the wealth gap, what do Opal and Arthur have in common, both in their life stories and in their personalities? How does the balance of power shift between them? What do they ultimately need from each other?
3. What is the effect of reading the novel through Opal's first-person eyes, with footnotes written in the voice of a careful researcher? How was the tale transformed when you read it from Eleanor's point of view in chapter 30? What is Charlotte's role as a librarian in trying to discern and preserve the truth, despite a multitude of versions of a single story?
4. What were your initial theories about the creatures haunting Arthur? How did your perception of him change throughout the novel?
5. As you were reading about Gravely Brothers Coal & Power, what historical truths emerged about the horrors of enslavement and environmental destruction in the American South? What motivated that violence, and what tethers Eden's residents to this place, despite it?
6. What tactics does Elizabeth Baine use to manipulate Opal? How are the actions of Innovative Solutions Consulting Group different from Opal's acts of theft and deception?
7. How did you react to the artwork that is featured throughout the book? What do the images express that words cannot?
8. Discuss Opal's scrubbing and sprucing up of Starling House as a metaphor for other types of restoration and excavation she experiences. What else is recovered besides the beauty of Starling House's architecture? How much agency does the house itself have?
9. How do Jasper and Opal's memories of their mother sustain them, and limit them? What is her legacy, both good and bad? Discuss the many types of parenting performed in the novel.
10. Eleanor first thought there were cracks between a world of monstrous evil and our world, but eventually came to believe that the beasts were of our own making. What is your understanding of the evil forces that humanity has encountered through history—and the ingenuity of people like Opal who have conquered them?
11. How does Opal navigate her dream worlds? What strengths and fears are revealed when she sleeps?
12. Starling House has a vast library filled with books on folklore, mythology, and history. How do those books suggest the larger history of the Under land and the communities that encountered it?

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