

Discussion Questions

1. Leslie's decision to withhold information about the medical board complaint from Izzy has serious consequences. Was this decision justified given her desire to protect Izzy and their pregnancy? How might the story have unfolded differently if she had been honest from the beginning?
2. The novel explores several forms of addiction and recovery. How do Leslie's past struggles with alcoholism compare to Damon's substance abuse issues? What does the novel suggest about the factors that lead some people to recovery while others continue to struggle?
3. Michelle's mental health deteriorates throughout the story. What early warning signs of her condition did you notice? How do her childhood experiences with addiction and abuse in her family shape her adult behavior and decision-making?
4. Bryce Nelson uses his professional position to exploit vulnerable patients and colleagues. What systems or safeguards might have prevented his schemes? What does his character suggest about power dynamics in healthcare settings?
5. The novel features several strong female characters with different approaches to professional and personal challenges. Compare and contrast Leslie, Izzy, Michelle, Pearl, and Lynn. Which character did you find most compelling and why?
6. Family relationships play a crucial role in the novel. How do Leslie's childhood experiences with her parents affect her adult relationships and choices? How does this compare to other characters' family influences?
7. Trust and betrayal are central themes in *Tangled Darkness*. Which betrayals in the novel did you find most disturbing? How do characters rebuild trust after it has been broken?
8. The book explores the intersection of personal and professional ethics. How do characters like Bryce, Sloan, and Michelle justify crossing ethical boundaries? At what point does Leslie's investigation cross similar lines?
9. The badger amulet serves as an important symbol for Leslie. What other symbolic elements did you notice in the novel? How do these symbols enhance the story's themes?

10. How does trauma manifest differently across characters in the novel? What does the story suggest about healing from past trauma?
11. The novel presents a complex portrait of the healthcare system, particularly around addiction treatment. What critiques of the system did you identify, and what potential solutions does the story suggest?
12. By the end of the novel, Leslie has uncovered family secrets that reshape her understanding of her childhood. How does this parallel other "unveilings" in the story? What do these revelations suggest about how our narratives impact our identities?