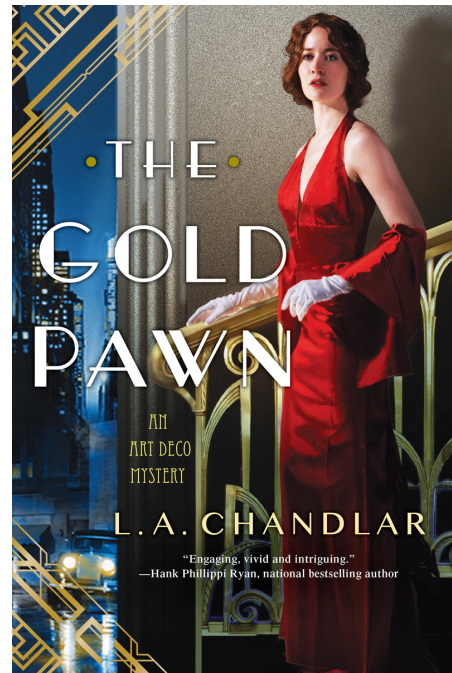


THE GOLD PAWN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your favorite overall themes? Identify and talk about them, then take a look at mine. I have a few in this book. Of course, one of the overall themes is of good and bad commingling in all of us. What do you think about that? Are people all good or all bad? Why or why not? Do you think, like Robert Louis Stevenson, that there is a point of no return, where choice becomes forfeited?
2. My favorite theme of this book, which will overarch into all of the books in this series, is from the Latin phrase that Lane discovers in her father's study: *pulchritudo ex cinere*, "beauty out of ashes." I think it sums up this era and the beauty that I wanted to highlight. What are examples of beauty coming out of ashes in *The Gold Pawn*? There are many!



3. The other theme I enjoyed that stems from the two themes above: choices. What are examples of pivotal choices that were made by the characters? What impact did they have on the story?
4. Had you read *Jekyll and Hyde* before? I didn't want to reveal the title early on because of all my own prejudices I'd had before I actually read the book. From movies like *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and cartoons like Bugs Bunny, we get a more lighthearted and Halloweeny feel than the book merits. It's much darker and grittier than that. What were your thoughts about the choice of that piece of highlighted art for this book?
5. The scene where the limb is cut from Lane's tree actually happened to me, just not with such a nefarious intent. Much of Lane's house is taken from memories of my grandparents' home. The dream Lane has that was almost real to her, of walking up the stairs and experiencing that home once again was one that I had, many years after my grandparents were long gone. When I drove by their old home one day, I parked and just walked around the block. I came to their house, and the owners had cut off that limb from the purple maple. It honestly felt like I'd been sucker punched. I couldn't believe it. It was certainly because it had become overgrown and just needed pruning, but I felt like I'd lost a friend. For you, what memories of your own childhood are your favorites? Do you have anything that was iconic for you, like my tree was for me? What place and time would you go back to if you could for just one day?