

THE HITCHCOCK HOTEL

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

What is the significance of the crows to the story? Why does the book begin and end from their point of view?

2.

Which of the characters did you best relate to? Which did you dislike or disagree with the most? Did your connections change from chapter to chapter? If so, how and to whom?

3.

Hitchcock loved to use the “bomb under the table” example to illustrate the difference between surprise and suspense. It goes like this: if two people sit in a café talking for fifteen minutes, and at the end we the audience discover a bomb is under the table, that’s surprise. But if we the audience know from the beginning that the bomb is there while the two people talking don’t, that’s suspense. The best books have both, but which is more important to you as a reader: surprise or suspense?

4.

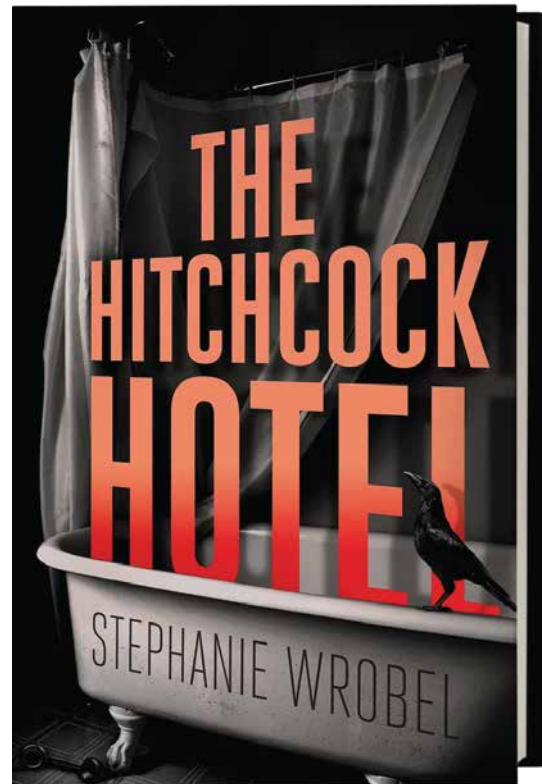
What common motifs and imagery did you notice between Hitchcock’s films and **The Hitchcock Hotel**?

5.

Alfred Smettle says, “I’m no Peeping Tom, but I do like to observe people—their gestures and emotions, the way they talk, the way they think. So many times I have ridden a train or sat in a lobby wishing I could watch a scene unfold without being part of it, without any awareness of my own corporeality.” We are all voyeurs to some extent, curious about the strangers around us. When does observation cross the line?

6.

Was Alfred’s grudge against his friends justified? Should old grievances be left in the past, or should we always attempt to resolve them, even if decades later?



7.

One of the “Easy A” excerpts in the novel says: “Hitchcock was never concerned with plausibility in his films. That was the easiest part, he said, so why bother? Call the police, and the story is over. He was much more interested in evoking a mood, in creating suspense.” How important for you is plausibility in a novel?

8.

Hitchcock was accused of sexual assault and harassment by actress Tippi Hedren, among other women. If you’re a fan of his work, do these accusations change your feelings about his films? Can we separate the art from the artist?

9.

Do you feel Alfred deserved what he got? Why or why not?

10.

Hitchcock once said, “The more successful the villain, the more successful the picture. That’s a cardinal rule.” By this standard, what are some of the most successful books and films of all time? Who do you view as **The Hitchcock Hotel**’s villain(s)? Did they have any redeeming qualities?

11.

Would you stay in a horror-themed hotel?