

Theodosia and the Serpents of Chaos

by: R. L. La Fevers

When Theodosia's mother returns from her latest archaeological dig bearing the Heart of Egypt — a legendary amulet belonging to an ancient tomb — Theo learns that it comes inscribed with a curse so black and vile that it threatens to crumble the British Empire from within and start a war too terrible to imagine. Intent on returning the malevolent artifact to its rightful place, Theo devises a daring plan to put things right. But even with the help of her younger brother, a wily street urchin, and the secret society known as the Brotherhood of the Chosen Keepers, it won't be easy . . . she quickly finds herself pursued down dark alleys, across an ocean, through the bustling crowds of Cairo, and straight into the heart of an ancient mystery. R. L. La Fevers lives on a small ranch in Southern California with her husband and two teenaged sons.

Discussion Questions for At-Home Participation.

1. There are a number of concrete objects used in *Theodosia and the Serpents of Chaos* to convey various emotions: fear, parental love, emotional abandonment. Can you identify some of the concrete objects?
2. Do you think the book could have been set in another time period and worked just as well? Also, how much historic and atmospheric detail is enough and when does it become too much?
3. Theodosia is a very unusual child, not necessarily representative of all eleven year olds. Do you think her individual quirks and characteristics help make her real or make her seem larger than life? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel that Theodosia was emotionally abandoned by her parents? How did that drive her actions? What other options were available to her besides coping with the circumstances the way she did?
5. Many people are of the opinion that children's books should teach a lesson. Do you feel that this book taught a lesson, and if so, what lesson was it?
6. Do you think that Theodosia's cleverness and competence would have been treated differently by those around her if she had been a boy? If so, in what ways?
7. Do you think children are open to the world in ways that adults aren't? Are their intuitions more in tune to the events around them? Do you sense or noticing things that the adults around you didn't? What sorts of things?
8. Grandmother Throckmorton was an example of the Victorian restrictions placed on women during that time. Was she an effective contrast to Theo's newer, more modern Edwardian attitudes?

9. This book touches on the historic fact of British museums and archaeologists removing artifacts from other countries. Today, many nations are asking for their artifacts to be returned. What do you think of that? Should artifacts be returned to their country of origin? Under what circumstances? What if they were a gift from the country's leader at the time? Would that alter your decision?