LAST TO LEAVE

DISCUSSION GUIDE



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ABOUT THE BOOK

When seventeen-year-old up-and-coming video game streamer and content creator, Fallon, earns a coveted spot in the new murder-mystery reality game, SleuthIt, her objective seems pretty straightforward: play the game, solve the mystery, and win the million-dollar prize. The fact that she'll do it all on livestream with seven other young content creators only makes things better. After all, increased exposure is influencer gold, and winning will catapult her gaming channel to the next level.

But unbeknownst to each other, the contestants are interconnected, and when one of them turns out to be Fallon's online gaming partner, Dante, she starts to doubt the objective of the game. The intrigue runs much deeper than Fallon ever thought—the eight contestants chosen for the show are not the only players in the game, and the interlopers have hidden agendas and competing interests.

As secrets come out and the lines between ally and adversary blur, Fallon will have to figure out what game she's really playing, who might be playing her, and what she's willing to sacrifice in pursuit of fame and fortune.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Teresa Richards writes young-adult fiction and is a member of SCBWI and the Storymakers Guild. She's a California girl in Kentucky and loves hiking, playing the piano, and impromptu dance parties. Teresa and her husband have five kids and an anxious dog. When she's not busy writing or momming, she's probably singing or hiding in the house with a treat she's not planning to share. She's the author of *Emerald Bound* and *Flippin' Skaters*. *Last to Leave* is her hardcover debut.

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Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing assignment!

- This book begins with Fallon's computer reminding her to take a movement break and drink water. Why is this reminder necessary? What does this tell us about Fallon's character? Have you ever been so absorbed in a task or activity that you needed a reminder to meet your health needs?
- What are some of the fictional video games that Fallon plays in *Last to Leave*? Which of these games would you choose to play if you could only pick one?
- What are some of the strategies Fallon uses to deal with harassment, both online and in real life, throughout this book?
- Fallon frequently plays "would you rather" with her streaming audience. What does this game reveal about Fallon and the people around her? How does it connect to larger themes about making choices in this book?
- Why does Fallon not swear on her channel? What are some alternative swear words she uses? What role does swearing play in your own life? Have you ever adjusted your speech or behavior online due to platform rules or algorithms?
- What happened to the Girls Gotta Game club?
- How does the SleuthIt game work? What makes it different from the other games Fallon plays? What's at stake if Fallon loses?
- SleuthIt is set in June 1924. What was happening in the US and the world at this time? How do the events of the game relate to real-world history? If you could play a game like SleuthIt set in any period in history, which would you choose and why?
- This book contains lots of period slang. What words do you recognize? Were there any that surprised you? Look up the 1920s slang glossary in the back of the book. Do you have a favorite?
- Why do Fallon and Gage have different opinions about their mother's substance abuse and residential treatment?
- Why doesn't Gage want Fallon to compete in SleuthIt? Do you think his concerns are valid, or is he overreacting? If you were to compete in a reality show competition like SleuthIt, would your parent or guardian support or oppose your participation?
- Why is it important to Fallon to support girls in gaming?
- What does Fallon's official character profile tell us about the setting and context of the SleuthIt game? What do we know about the other characters from this document? How is her character profile similar to her real life background?
- What are some of the differences Fallon notices between Ohio and LA? How do these differences set the tone for the SleuthIt game?

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- What parts of the influencer economy are represented by the SleuthIt contestants? Are there any major segments of the streaming world that are not represented? Why do you think the SleuthIt organizers selected these contestants?
- How is the SleuthIt competition recorded and streamed to viewers? How is this model different from traditional reality shows? What technology is available to the contestants to help them navigate and participate in the game? What role do viewers play?
- What does Fallon find out about Dante when she arrives at SleuthIt? How does she react? As the game goes on, how does Fallon come to terms with Dante's revelation? Have you ever experienced a shocking revelation from a friend or family member?
- What do the contestants' responses to Fallon's question in "The 1920s Called" reveal about their personalities? What would your answer to Fallon's question be? How does this question relate to the experience of entering the SleuthIt game?
- SleuthIt players sometimes interact in character and sometimes interact as themselves. What do you notice about these in-character versus out-of-character interactions? How does Fallon feel about being in character and out of character? Do you have experience playing a similar type of game?
- Do you agree with Fallon's self-assessment as an "epic destroyer of friendships" (page 147)? What is her general opinion of her own social skills and personality? Are these self-perceptions always accurate?
- What are shippers? How does being a public figure impact Fallon's relationship status with Dante?
- Fallon identifies three main motives for murder. What are they? Do you agree with her perspective or is it more complicated than that?
- What is the SleuthyBooth? How does Fallon react when she is asked an upsetting question?
- What happened with Fallon and LOGjam? How did it impact Fallon?
- The characters are all supplied with alibis for the night of the murder. Are all of these alibis equally solid? Which characters could have been present at the scene of the crime?
- What does Fallon discover about the nature of the in-game clues in "Official Records"?
- How does Fallon's relationship with her former friend group change over the course of the book? What inspires them to reestablish ties with her?
- What do we learn about Dante's relationship with his friends from Four Pranksters and a Llama over the course of the book? How does he feel about the nickname "Big D"? Have you ever been uncomfortable with the way a friend group treats you? How does Dante ultimately decide to handle things?
- What does Fallon discover about the connections between the contestants? Why do you think the SleuthIt organizers chose contestants who were connected without their knowledge?

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- How does Fallon investigate beyond the bounds of the game? What does she uncover about the inner workings of SleuthIt?
- On pages 274–276, Fallon messages her mother on a platform she expects her never to check. Why does she send messages without believing they will be read or responded to? What does this passage say about Fallon's relationship with her mother?
- Why does Fallon say "Love should come with a warning sign"? Do you agree? If you were to write a warning sign for love, what would it say? If you had to read a warning sign before loving a person, do you think you would continue to love them anyway?
- It is technically permissible within the player contracts for the rules of SleuthIt to change during play. How do these changes manifest over the course of the game? Would you agree to play a game with changing rules?
- What is the final correct answer to the SleuthIt mystery? How do the players arrive at this conclusion? Did you suspect the correct answer or did you come to a different conclusion as you read? Why doesn't the game end once the answer is revealed?
- Who ultimately won the game? How does Fallon react to this outcome, publicly and privately? What other events in her life resolve or evolve in the last two chapters of the book?
- Do you have a favorite chapter title in this book? How do the chapter titles relate to the events of each chapter? Why do you think the chapters are not numbered as well as titled?