



DEBUTANTE BY DAY. MURDERER BY NIGHT. EDINBURGH'S ONLY HOPE.

EXPLORING *THE FALCONER* THROUGH DISCUSSION AND WRITING

The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts or alternatively, they can be used to as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. At the beginning of *The Falconer*, Lady Aileana Kameron offers, “I’ve memorized their every accusation: Murderess. She did it. Was crouched over her mother’s body, covered in blood.” Though these comments are painful, why doesn’t Aileana do more to dispel the rumors surrounding the death of her mother and her role in her murder?
2. Consider the Edinburgh of 1844 described in *The Falconer*; do you find the setting to be particularly important to May’s novel? Why or why not?
3. Consider all of Aileana’s inventions. Which is the one you find most impressive? For what reason? What does her role as an inventor tell us about her as a person?
4. Though they are ladies who in many ways are products of the time in which they live, it can be argued that Aileana and her mother are also modern women. In what ways is this true?
5. Consider the novel’s cover. In what ways is the image portrayed there symbolic of the events that transpire throughout the course of the book?
6. Though most of what we learn is shared through her memories and flashbacks, how would you describe the relationship between Aileana and her mother? What does her mother do to educate her daughter and also to protect her? How is Aileana’s relationship with her father in stark contrast to that of the relationship she had with her mother?
7. In your opinion, why does Derrick have such contempt against Kiaran? Do you think it’s warranted?
8. As she considers her need for vengeance for the death of her mother, Aileana states, “This is what I live for now. Not the tea parties or assemblies or picnics at the Nor’ Loch, or the spine-straight, chin-up, shoulders-back polite conversation accompanied by fake smiles. Now I live for the chase, and for the kill.” How does Aileana’s statement capture the feelings of the woman she has become?

9. *The Falconer* is told in first person by Aileana; how would the story be different if someone besides she were telling it? How might the story change if Derrick, Aileana's pixie, were sharing her story? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
10. Consider the novel's unique blend of genres. Though much of this the novel is historical fiction in nature, the element of steampunk is present as well. In what ways does that manifest itself as the story is carried out? Provide some specific examples from the novel as support.
11. Describe Aileana. What makes her a dynamic character? Is she the type of person you'd want to befriend? Why or why not?
12. Based on what you learn about him from the novel, how would you describe Kiaran, Aileana's Fae mentor? Is he a likeable character? Why or why not? Why does Aileana find herself so drawn to him? Though there are many reasons not to, why does Aileana trust him to train her? In what ways does he seem so mysterious? How does his being from the Fae world put him at an advantage and disadvantage in her world?
13. If you could select one character in the novel to learn more about, who would it be? What is it about this particular character you found interesting or intriguing?
14. Aileana states, "Time won't fix me. Time allows me to become more skillful at hiding how much I hurt inside. Time makes me a great liar. Because when it comes to grief, we all like to pretend." Do you agree with her? How do you or the people you are closest to deal with their grief?
15. In your opinion, why does Aileana choose not to confide in her best friend Catherine as a means of support and assistance? What can be inferred by her choice not to do so? Do you think her decision is wise? Why or why not?
16. Aileana's father, the Marquess of Douglas, tells her, "Duty comes first." In his mind, what are the duties that he expects his daughter to fulfill? Why does his expectations prove to be so difficult for Aileana?
17. When considering her understanding of her new role as a Falconer, she thinks, "Father may think that I play with my inventions and neglect my responsibilities, but he's wrong. This is my responsibility, my burden. I won't run away from it. I won't." What makes being the last Falconer so difficult? Do you think it's a burden you'd want? Why or why not?
18. Why is being a Seer so difficult for Gavin? Why does having the Sight make him so distrustful of all the Fae?
19. How would you characterize the relationship between Aileana and Kiaran? Do you feel that it changes over the course of the novel? If so, in what ways?
20. While considering Kiaran's past, Aileana offers, "I'm beginning to realize how much our secrets define us . . . Now our boundaries are fading, and we grasp those last few secrets we still do have, because baring one's soul is so much more difficult than pretending." What does Aileana stand to lose? From your personal experience, do you agree with her? Why is it dangerous to be transparent and honest with the people you care most about?
21. Consider the variety of settings for *The Falconer*; name the three places you believe to be most important to the story. Using textual evidence from the book, explain why you find them to be significant to the overall story structure.

22. In analyzing how Kiaran sees her, Aileana states, “I am the wild creature he saw fight, kill, and survive only last night. Dresses conceal my brokenness. They cloak the savage creature that lives inside me and thrives on anger. I am a wolf in sheep’s clothing.” Why is it so important for Aileana that Kiaran see her as a huntress rather than as a lady? Why is it about the hunt that makes her feel like his equal?
23. Using the phrase, “This is a story about…” Supply five words to describe *The Falconer*. Explain your choices.
24. When talking about herself before her mother’s death, she states, “The Aileana of last year was a complete and utter ninny.” Why do you think she is so critical of the girl she used to be? Besides her mother’s murder, what else serves as a catalyst for her transformation to the person she becomes?
25. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges Aileana faces in *The Falconer*? What do you predict will happen in the next installment of the trilogy?

**Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1 and Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2., W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3., W. 8.3., W. 9-10.3.

ABOUT THE BOOK



The Falconer (Book 1)
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Ages 14 and up • F&P Text Level Gradient: X

Edinburgh, 1844. Beautiful Aileana Kameron only looks the part of an aristocratic young lady. In fact, she’s spent the year since her mother died developing her ability to sense the presence of Sithichean, a faery race bent on slaughtering humans. She has a secret mission: to destroy the faery who murdered her mother. But when she learns she’s a Falconer, the last in a line of female warriors and the sole hope of preventing a powerful faery population from massacring all of humanity, her quest for revenge gets a whole lot more complicated. The first volume of a trilogy from an exciting new voice in young adult fantasy, this electrifying thriller blends romance and action with steampunk technology and Scottish lore in a deliciously addictive read.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ELIZABETH MAY

hails from California and is currently a PhD student in social anthropology at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. *The Falconer* is her first novel.

PRAISE FOR THE FALCONER

“A riveting world, a fierce heroine, and electrifying action—I burned through this sparkling debut!”

—**SARAH J. MAAS**, *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Throne of Glass* series

“Simply put, my favorite YA paranormal this year. A must read!”

—*New York Times* Bestselling author **JENNIFER L. ARMENTROUT**

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