

ONLY ONE SURVIVES

Discussion Questions

Please note these questions contain **spoilers**. You may wish to review them after you've finished the novel.



1. Why do you think Vienna and Madison were immediately drawn to each other and created such a strong initial friendship? What did you make of the evolution of their relationship?
2. What was Vienna's most life-defining event, and why? What might her life have been like if this event had never taken place?
3. Vienna and Madison came from vastly different backgrounds. Discuss the impact of their upbringing on them and their friendship. What might've happened if the cafeteria altercation in twelfth grade had never taken place?
4. Did your allegiances shift during the story? Toward whom, why, and when?
5. Describe your reaction when you began reading Part II. How did you feel about Vienna's increasing troubles in Part II compared to when you read what she went through in Part I? At what point, if ever, did you feel for her?
6. What do you think would've happened to the Bittersweet if they'd never driven to the Catskills on that fateful snowy night? Would they have achieved the success they hoped for? What else might've torn the band apart?
7. What did you make of the social media comments throughout the story? How much of an impact do you think these kinds of comments have on people in real life? How do you think being behind a screen influences what people say online compared to when they're in person?
8. What was your favorite scene in *Only One Survives*, and why?
9. Did you have a favorite band member of the Bittersweet, and why? Were they your favorite character overall or was that someone else?
10. Read through the lyrics from The Bittersweet in the Book Club Kit (see www.hannahmarymckinnon.com for details). Which is your favorite song, and why? Do you think the lyrics tie into the novel in a specific way? If so, how? Do they make you look at any parts of the story differently?

11. How much and what kind of an influence has music had on your life? Do you play an instrument and/or do you sing? Who are your favorite bands and how has your taste in music evolved over time?
12. Did you discover new-to-you bands and artists while reading *Only One Survives*? Have you listened to the playlist? What other artists do you think Vienna would listen to? (Playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6b9z0AGBTH8R3RUZnex5gK>)
13. Were you surprised and satisfied by the ending? What do you think might happen to Libby—will she break her silence? What might become of the Bittersweet’s legacy now?