



1. We seem to put a lot of emphasis on the stories of how couples meet—husbands and wives find themselves fielding this question even after they’ve been together for most of their lives. Why do you think that is?
2. At pivotal moments, Violet and Finn think similar thoughts, but in different contexts. In Chapters 1 and 13, they separately reflect on their odds of getting together, and express that they can’t believe their luck. In Chapters 17 and 18, both feel that they have “never been so sure”—and “never been so wrong.” How do these echoes serve to highlight how well matched and/or mismatched they are?
3. Caitlin and Finn have, by most accounts, a platonic friendship—something many people consider rare or even impossible. In what ways is their relationship meaningful? In what ways is it unhealthy? Do you think there may have been more to it than was ever revealed on the page?
4. Do you sympathize with Caitlin’s position, as the story unfolds, or do you find her behavior inexcusable under any circumstances?
5. In what ways is Violet complacent in the events leading up to Finn’s ultimate disappearance with Bear? Do you feel she isn’t complacent at all?
6. Violet and Finn are both orphans by the time they meet. How does that affect their emotional attachments, separately and together?
7. Gram is the only one remaining at Violet’s side as certain hard truths come to light, and she serves as both a sounding board and a mirror. Do you find her assessments of Violet accurate? How is Gram right about her, and how might she be wrong?
8. Finn cannot accept the forgiveness of Maribel’s family because he cannot forgive himself. Can you relate to this point of view? Do you think he ultimately would have been any better off if he’d kept in contact with the Bransons?
9. Do you imagine that if Finn had never met Maribel, he and Violet would have had a happily-ever-after relationship?

Discussion Questions



St. Martin's
Griffin

10. Caitlin seems sure that Maribel was not “the one” for Finn, but one of multiple suitable matches. Violet seemed equally sure that Finn *was* “the one” for her—until she wasn’t. Do you think the concept of “the one” is hopeful, or damaging? Do you believe in an “only and forever” kind of love?
11. Did George ultimately surprise you, or were his reactions in some ways inevitable?
12. Do you think Caitlin and George get off too easily, or do you imagine they privately pay a higher price than others may be aware of?
13. What was the true role of fate in the story? Were there pivotal “almost” moments and near-misses that you didn’t fully absorb the impact of until they’d passed?
14. What do you make of the novel’s final encounter? What do you imagine the future holds for this family?
15. In our own missed connections, are we better off not knowing what might have been?