

## Discussion Guide for *Only If You're Lucky* by Stacy Willingham

1. The story revolves around the friendships of Margot, Lucy, Sloane, and Nicole. How did the dynamics among these friends evolve throughout the novel? Were their friendships healthy or toxic?
2. How did Margot's character evolve from the beginning of the story to the end? In what ways did her past, especially the loss of her best friend Eliza, influence her choices and actions?
3. How does the opening epigraph, "If I ever read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend —Robert Louis Stevenson," establish the novel's tone and connection to the friend group? What implications does it have for the characters, particularly Lucy?
4. Margot talks about grief changing everything, not just you. How do you see grief weaving into the story? Can you spot other instances of loss and grief affecting the characters?
5. Comparing Lucy and Margot's friendship with that of Eliza and Margot – what parallels do you see? How do Lucy and Eliza impact Margot differently?
6. True identity versus perceived identity – thoughts? How do the characters grapple with these concepts?
7. Lucy is described as larger than life, magnetic, and dangerous. How did Lucy's personality impact the other characters, especially Margot? Discuss the power dynamics within the group.
8. What do you think about the dynamics of female friendships and the concept of the "mean girl" in the novel? How did the author portray these dynamics, and do you think it reflects real-life experiences?
9. The book explores themes of envy and betrayal. In what instances do these themes manifest in the characters' actions and decisions? How do these themes contribute to the overall suspense of the story?
10. The novel uses a dual timeline, alternating between "Before" and "After" Lucy's disappearance. How did this narrative structure enhance or hinder the storytelling? Did it contribute to the suspense?

11. How did the author incorporate mystery and thriller elements into the narrative? Were you able to predict the twists and turns, or were there surprises that caught you off guard?
12. Discuss the motivations of Margot and Lucy. How do their past experiences shape their choices, and do you empathize with their motivations?
13. Let's dive into Margot's memories with Eliza – how do they shape her college identity, and maybe her decisions too?
14. Margot gets called "malleable." Do you think that fits? How does her identity ebb and flow as the story unfolds?
15. What are your thoughts on the friend group dynamics? How do the girls stand out from each other, and where do you spot the similarities?
16. Lucy's labeled as mysterious and enigmatic – what's your take on her? Love her, hate her?
17. How do the characters navigate trust issues among themselves? What role does trust play in their relationships?
18. Lucy's betrayals are no secret to Margot. Why do you think Margot sticks around? What's the deal with trust and loyalty in friendships?
19. Lucy says pledges are “desperate to belong.” Does that desperation show in Margot or Lucy? How does the theme of belonging play out?
20. The nods to Jekyll and Hyde – any connections you see with the characters? What vibes from that story pop up in this one?
21. Discuss the role of the college and dark academic atmosphere at Rutledge in amplifying suspense. How does the setting contribute to the overall tension in the story?
22. Examine Lucy's fascination with stars, including those on her necklace, ceiling, phone, and the song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds.” What do the stars symbolize for Lucy, and how do they connect to the characters, particularly Eliza?
23. Some readers mentioned that this book felt different from Stacy Willingham's previous works. If you've read her other books, how does "Only If You're Lucky" compare in terms of style, pacing, and overall impact?

24. Without giving away spoilers, discuss your thoughts on the ending. Did the resolution satisfy you, or were there lingering questions or surprises that left an impact?