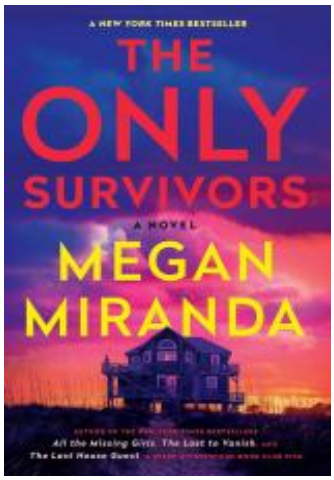
The Only Survivors

by Megan Miranda



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of ALL THE MISSING GIRLS and ?master of suspense, Megan Miranda? (Mary Kubica, *New York Times* bestselling author of THE GOOD GIRL), a thrilling mystery about a group of former classmates who reunite to mark the 10th anniversary of a tragic accident --- only to have one of the survivors disappear, casting fear and suspicion on the original tragedy.

Seven hours in the past. Seven days in the present. Seven survivors remaining. Who would you save?

A decade ago, two vans filled with high school seniors on a school service trip crashed into a Tennessee ravine --- a tragedy that claimed the lives of multiple classmates and teachers. The nine students who managed to escape the river that night were irrevocably changed. A year later, after one of the survivors dies by suicide on the anniversary of the crash, the rest of them make a pact: to come together each year to commemorate that terrible night.

To keep one another safe.
To hold one another accountable.
Or both.

Their annual meeting place, a house on the Outer Banks, has long been a refuge. But by the 10th anniversary, Cassidy Bent has worked to distance herself from the tragedy, and from the other survivors. She?s changed her mobile number. She?s blocked the others? email addresses. This year, she is determined to finally break ties once and for all. But on the day of the reunion, she receives a text with an obituary attached: another survivor is gone. Now they are seven, and Cassidy finds herself hurling back toward the group, wild with grief --- and suspicion.

Almost immediately, something feels off this year. Cassidy is the first to notice when Amaya, annual organizer, slips away, overwhelmed. This wouldn?t raise alarm except for the impending storm. Suddenly, they?re facing the threat of

closed roads and surging waters?again. Then Amaya stops responding to her phone. After all they?ve been through, she wouldn?t willfully make them worry. Would she?

And --- as they promised long ago --- each survivor will do whatever he or she can do to save one another. Won?t they?

A propulsive and chilling locked-box mystery filled with the dazzling hairpin twists that are the author?s signature, THE ONLY SURVIVORS is *New York Times* bestselling author Megan Miranda?s best novel yet.

Discussion Guide

1. This book comes at a time when true crime and societal fascination with tragic stories is at an all-time high. As a group, discuss the true crime phenomenon. What drives it? Has fiction contributed to this rise?

2. Thrillers often provide a chance for the readers to exercise their reasoning skills and guess twists and solve mysteries alongside the characters. Throughout this book, did you correctly guess any parts of the plot? Which parts did you not anticipate? Does trying to guess twists contribute to or take away from your reading experience?

3. Throughout the book, references to luck and fate reappear --- Cassidy states that the survivor?s reunion house came down to luck (page 7), Amaya?s dad was fond of saying that their family made their own fate (page 40), and Russ asks Clara if she believes in fate (page 32). Do you think there?s a difference between luck and fate? If yes, which has the greater influence on the lives of the characters in this story --- luck or fate?

4. Early in the story, we become aware of Cassidy?s reluctance to reunite with the survivors for the 10th year. She thinks that this is preventing her from moving on. If you were involved in a tragedy, would you choose to reunite with your fellow survivors annually? Do you think this would help your healing process or set you back, forcing you to deal with emotions you want to move on from?

5. Lies seem to beget more lies in this story. Trace the big lies, or moments when characters withheld the truth. What lie changed the course of the story? If Cassidy initially told the group that her standing in front of the bus caused the accident, would the events of the story differ greatly? What lies had the greatest snowball effect?

6. At the end of the story, Cassidy promises to ?leave the past to the past, and never look back.? After the final scene, do you think ?leaving the past to the past? is a good idea? Do you think the group would benefit from another reunion to deal with the new truth they have uncovered, or should they never speak about it again?

7. Consider the structure of THE ONLY SURVIVORS. How do the shifting time frames and point of views impact the story? While reading, did you think that Cassidy was a reliable narrator? Did you think any of the other POVs were ones to distrust?

8. The accident occurred when Cassidy and the other survivors were in high school --- a pivotal time in all their lives as they were preparing to graduate and enter the ?real world.? Do you think the accident severely altered the course of Cassidy?s life? Where do you think she would be if she never went on that trip? Can you imagine a vastly different life for any of the other characters?

9. Thrillers often have clues that are covertly dispersed throughout the story, leading to a satisfying ending that is not completely unexpected. What clues did you pick up on that related to the ending? Were you suspicious of Russ? Were your suspicions of any other characters unwarranted?

10. Guilt pervades this story as various characters feel guilty for their role in the accident and the aftermath --- Amaya feels guilty because the trip was her idea; Cassidy feels guilty because she inadvertently caused the accident. How can these characters overcome their guilt?

11. The characters in this story seem to deal with a lot of the tragedies on their own instead of calling authorities or seeking other sources of professional help. What would happen if the characters involved the police? Do you think anyone deserves to serve prison time for their actions?

12. Though Russ was not directly involved in the accident, he also experienced a tragedy with the loss of his sister and the ways he and his family were neglected in the aftermath. Do you sympathize with Russ? To what extent are his actions justified? To what extent are they not?

13. The characters in this story cope with the accident in different ways. What are some of the healthier ways? What personalized advice would you give the remaining survivors, knowing all that has happened in the past 10 years?

Author Bio

Megan Miranda is the *New York Times* bestselling author of ALL THE MISSING GIRLS; THE PERFECT STRANGER; THE LAST HOUSE GUEST, a Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick; THE GIRL FROM WIDOW HILLS; SUCH A QUIET PLACE; THE LAST TO VANISH; THE ONLY SURVIVORS; DAUGHTER OF MINE; and YOU BELONG HERE. She has also written several books for young adults. She grew up in New Jersey, graduated from MIT, and lives in North Carolina with her husband and two children.

The Only Survivors
by Megan Miranda

Publication Date: March 12, 2024
Genres: Fiction, Mystery, Psychological Suspense, Psychological Thriller, Suspense, Thriller
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: S&S/Marysue Rucci Books
ISBN-10: 1668010429
ISBN-13: 9781668010426