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Suggested Reads

We Are the Water Protectors (Picture Book)

Carole Lindstrom

I Sang You Down from the Stars (Picture Book)

Tasha Skillett-Summer

Healer of the Water Monster (Kids Fiction)

Brian Young

Rez Dogs (Kids Fiction)

Joseph Bruchac

Firekeeper's Daughter (Teen Fiction)

Angeline Boulley

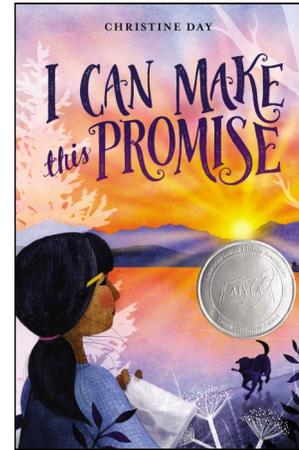
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Discussion Guide

I Can Make This Promise by Christine Day



From Booklist

It's summertime in Seattle for 12-year-old Edie, and between animating a short film with her best friends and adjusting to new braces, she is keeping busy. Nothing could have prepared her for a discovery in her parents' attic: a box full of photographs and letters belonging to a woman named Edith Graham, someone whose likeness is uncannily similar to Edie's. Edie always knew her mother was both Native American and adopted, but who was Edith Graham? As we follow Edie in unraveling this mystery, Day (herself having ties to the Upper Skagit tribe) offers readers a rich story that is both powerfully genuine in its conflicts and delightfully imaginative in its resolutions. The narrative explores issues relevant to tween readers, such as maneuvering through a friendship that is changing, coping with painful braces, and confronting family secrets. If that weren't enough, this debut also offers compelling historical knowledge about the Pacific Northwest Native American tribes, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, and what it means to find one's heritage.

--Stephanie Harper, Booklist (2010)



Discussion Topics

1. After finding the box in the attic, Edie asks her parents, “Why am I Edith?” and “Where did my name come from?” (pg. 49) What is the story behind Edie’s name? By the end of the book, how does she feel about her name?
2. Why are our individual names important? How do our names connect us to the places and people we come from? What is the story behind your own name?
3. Where might you learn more about the land you inhabit, the history of those lands, and how to actively be part of a better future going forward together? How might you share what you learn with your community?
4. In one of her letters, Edith Graham writes: “I must admit, I’m homesick. It’s lonely being the only Indian woman around.” (p. 143) Do other characters feel lonely throughout this book? Can you identify any patterns or similarities between their moments of loneliness?
5. Over the course of this novel, Edie’s friendships change. Take a moment to reflect on her relationships with Amelia, Serenity, Libby and Roger. What is the nature of Edie’s relationships with each person? How are these relationships significant to Edie’s growth?
6. Why do you think the author chose the title *I can Make this Promise*? What is the main promise Edie makes in this story? How does she fulfill this promise? How might she honor it in the future?
7. Make your own promise. Reflect on the people, places, memories and experiences that are most important to you. what can you do to fulfill this promise right now? How might you honor your promise in the future?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ADAPTED FROM AUTHOR'S WEBSITE

Author Biography



Christine Day (Upper Skagit) grew up in Seattle, nestled between the sea, the mountains, and the pages of her favorite books. Her debut novel, *I Can Make This Promise*, was a best book of the year from *Kirkus*, *School Library Journal*, NPR, and the Chicago Public Library, as well as a Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book, and an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book. Her second novel, *The Sea in Winter*, was an Indie Kids’ Next List selection, a Junior Library Guild selection, and the recipient of three starred reviews. She also wrote the forthcoming *She Persisted: Maria Tallchief*, an early reader biography in a new series inspired by Chelsea Clinton’s bestselling picture book. Christine lives in the Pacific Northwest with her family.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S WEBSITE
PHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR'S WEBSITE
