

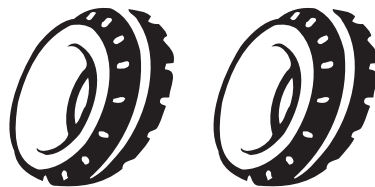
# DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Five Little Indians*

by Michelle Good

BOOK GROUP

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## **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

*Reprinted from publisher.*

Michelle Good is a writer of Cree ancestry and a member of the Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. She obtained her law degree after three decades of working with indigenous communities and organizations. She earned her MFA in Creative Writing at UBC, while still practising law, and won the HarperCollins/UBC Prize in 2018. Her poems, short stories and essays have been published in magazines and anthologies across Canada. Michelle Good lives and writes in south central British Columbia.

## **BOOK SUMMARY**

Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are Indigenous children taken away from their parents, and forced into an isolated residential school on the coast of British Columbia in the late 1960s. We spend a brief period of time with them while at the school, learning how they either escaped, or aged out of it, but the majority of the book focuses on their time as adults, most of them living in the seedy Eastside of Vancouver. The narrative follows each character separately, weaving in and out of their lives, not always in a linear fashion. Their paths do cross again, each sharing a version of trauma that most don't understand, even other Indigenous people who were spared from the residential school experience. Because these characters attended residential school in the 60s and 70s it's easy to dismiss this as a long ago problem, but I will remind my readers that the last residential school didn't close in Canada until 1996, so unfortunately the trauma these schools inflicted on people are still very much in the present for many people.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think the author, Michelle Good, chose to depict the characters' lives after they left the school, and not during their time there?
2. Each character in the book shows us a different method of coping, healing, and living with the trauma inflicted by the Church and the Canadian government. Which character's story impacted you the most?
3. How do you see the effects of the schools being felt throughout the victims' lives and generations after?
4. Did this book change the way you think about Residential Schools and its last effects in Canada? If so, how?
5. Michelle Good weaves the five stories together, and each chapter focuses on a different character. What did you think about the format and structure — how did it affect your experience of reading?
6. Have you read or watched other stories about the Residential School experience? Was *Five Little Indians* different or similar, and in what ways?
7. Would you recommend the book, and if so, to who?

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