

GDPL Book Club Discussion Questions – Five Little Indians by Michelle Good

Feel free to make up your own questions – just don't make them sound like “homework.” ☺

- 1) Impression: what (if anything) in this book “struck” you - impressed you or annoyed you? Why? Read us a quote that stayed with you.
- 2) Theme/audience: What does the title refer to? What are this book's themes? Is any part of the author's life reflected in this book? Who was the author writing for? Does the book have a message or moral?
- 3) Setting and characters: Both are essential to this story. Do they feel fully-realized? Flat and clichéd, or realistic and believable? Does the setting feel “local” to us? Could you empathize with, or relate any of the characters? Which ones and why? As the characters grow up, how do their adult lives reflect their childhood experiences? Which characters do you think most exemplify the author's stated theme of intergenerational trauma?
- 4) Structure: The five characters' stories are “braided” through the book, and the prologue is really an epilogue. How did that story affect you – easy or difficult to keep track? Add to or detract from the book's overall impression and purpose?
- 5) Writing and plot: Did the author's language strike you as insightful, lyrical, descriptive - does each word “earn its keep”? Does the author “tell” or “show”? Any plot that you found remarkable in any way? Pacing too fast/slow/just right? Is there any hopefulness in this book?
- 6) Personal experience: The last Canadian residential school closed in 1996. What did you learn about residential schools and Indigenous people, as a child or as an adult? Does this book remind you of anything, or relate to anything, in your own life?
- 7) Awards and recommendation: This book won the 2020 Amazon First Novel Award and Governor General's Fiction Award. It is also contender on this year's [CBC Canada Reads](#), starting March 28/2022. Its defender says, “Everyone in Canada should read this book.” Do you agree? Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why, or why not?
- 8) Comparisons and adaptations: how does this book compare to any other fiction, memoirs, or films about residential schools you've seen? Could you imagine this book as a film or miniseries?

Further Reading and Viewing:

- Michelle Good's [biography](#) on her website
- Michelle Good's upcoming free [webinar](#) (5/22/22) on *Five Little Indians*
- Toronto Star [review](#) (4/16/20) of the book, and [article](#) (6/24/21) by Michelle Good
- Globe & Mail [review](#) ((5/28/21)
- Jessica McDiarmid and Michelle Good interview on [video](#): Defining Meaningful Allyship in the Quest for Reconciliation (Clyne Lecture at UBC Green College)