

I Can Make This Promise
Discussion Guide
Grades 3-7

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- What does it mean to be different?
- Is it important to know your family's history and heritage? Why or why not?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Frontload vocabulary for chapters 1-3 (see vocabulary guide)

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections. Prompt students to provide support for their answers from the text.

- How does Edie feel different? (Prologue)
- How does being on the reservation make Edie feel? (Ch. 1)
- In what ways are Edie and her mom connected to their Native American heritage?
- Describe Edie, Amelia, and Serenity. (Ch. 3) How are Amelia and Serenity different from each other? (Ch. 9) Do you think Amelia is a good friend? (Ch. 8, Ch. 9) Do you think Serenity is a good friend? (Ch. 29) Why or why not?
- What do Edie and her friends find in the attic? How does it set the story in motion? (Ch. 4)
- Should Edie tell her parents what she found or should she investigate on her own? (Ch. 5)
- How does knowing about the secret box affect Edie's relationship with her parents? (Ch. 6) How does it affect the rest of her life? (Ch. 7)
- What role does the dog play in the story?
- How do Edie's feelings change as she and her friends go through the box? (Ch. 12)
- Why does Edie confide in Uncle Phil? (Ch. 13)
- What do you learn about Edith from her letters? (Ch. 16, Ch. 20)
- Why does Edith leave California? (Ch. 23)
- What does Edie learn about her mom? (Ch. 25) What does Edie learn about her family? (Ch. 26)
- Why is Edie able to draw again? (Ch. 27)
- What happened to Edith and her baby? (Ch. 31)
- How do Edie's experiences from the 4th of July come back at the end of the story? (Ch. 34)
- How does Edie and Serenity's film tell Edie and her mom's story? How does it honor Edith? (epilogue)

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After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

In the story, Edie and her friends make a short film. If you could pick a topic to make a short film about, what would it be? Make a storyboard plan of your film.

Why is it important for people to be connected to their heritage? For example, why is it important for Native American children to grow up in their communities?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.