



Pushing the Limits of Heritage Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Heritage...it's who and where we come from. And why it matters. Our personal past shapes our identity, grounding us in a culture and a place. But the speed of modern life dims that sense of belonging. It erodes old traditions and disrupts our ancestors' land. Each generation loses more of their origin story. And rebuilding those bonds can take years of effort.

This Tender Land

William Kent Krueger, Fiction. 1932, Minnesota-the Lincoln School is a pitiless place where hundreds of Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to an orphan named Odie O'Banion, a lively boy whose exploits earn him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee, he and his brother Albert, their best friend Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own.

Over the course of one unforgettable summer, these four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, *This Tender Land* is an en-thralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole. [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

- The Lincoln School was a boarding school for Native American children. Its primary purpose was to assimilate the Native American children to American culture. Odie and Albert were the only white boys in the school for Indians. Why do you think the author made the two brothers white?
- Odie, Albert, Mose, and Emmy are all searching for peace and a place to call home. What do you think each character is looking for and what are their different definitions of home? In the end, do they all find what they are looking for, and if so how?
- Odie is a born storyteller even at his young age. Throughout the book he tells Albert, Emmy, and Mose tales about an imp, a princess, and the vagabonds. How and why do stories help us remember things?

