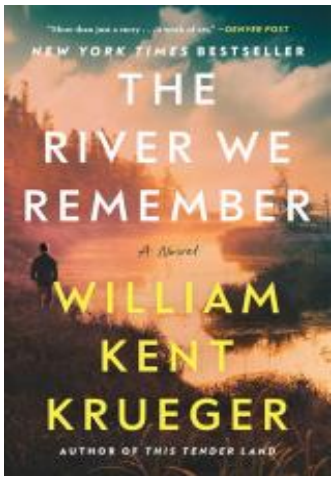
The River We Remember

by William Kent Krueger



About the Book

In 1958, a small Minnesota town is rocked by the murder of its most powerful citizen, pouring fresh fuel on old grievances in this dazzling stand-alone novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of the ?expansive, atmospheric American saga? (*Entertainment Weekly*) THIS TENDER LAND.

On Memorial Day, as the people of Jewel, Minnesota, gather to remember and honor the sacrifice of so many sons in the wars of the past, the half-clothed body of wealthy landowner Jimmy Quinn is found floating in the Alabaster River, dead from a shotgun blast.

Investigation of the murder falls to Sheriff Brody Dern, a highly decorated war hero who still carries the physical and emotional scars from his military service. Even before Dern has the results of the autopsy, vicious rumors begin to circulate that the killer must be Noah Bluestone, a Native American WWII veteran who recently has returned to Jewel with a Japanese wife. As suspicions and accusations mount and the town teeters on the edge of more violence, Dern struggles not only to find the truth of Quinn?s murder but also to put to rest the demons from his own past.

Caught up in the torrent of anger that sweeps through Jewel are a war widow and her adolescent son, the intrepid publisher of the local newspaper, an aging deputy and a crusading female lawyer, all of whom struggle with their own tragic histories and harbor secrets that Quinn?s death threatens to expose.

Both a complex, spellbinding mystery and a masterful portrait of midcentury American life from an author of novels ?as big-hearted as they come? (*Parade*), THE RIVER WE REMEMBER is an unflinching look at the wounds left by the wars we fight abroad and at home, a moving exploration of the ways in which we seek to heal, and a testament to the enduring power of the stories we tell about the places we call home.

Discussion Guide

1. William Kent Krueger?s background as a mystery writer allows him to expertly place clues in the book, leading readers into assumptions about the identity of the murderer before revealing the truth. Discuss the investigation as it unfolded, when you thought you knew who might have committed the crime, and when you were surprised by any outcome.

2. Brody is far from perfect and is secretly betraying his brother, yet he remains the moral center of the book. How is that possible? What qualities does he possess that make him admirable despite his flaws?

3. Connie Graff and Brody represent two different generations of law enforcement. What are some differences between Connie Graff and Brody? What are some similarities? How do they complement each other on the case?

4. How does the Quinn family?s wealth and status in the town of Jewel factor into the investigation?

5. One of the themes of the novel is the cost of war --- both physical and emotional --- on soldiers as well as those who remain on the home front. Which characters in the novel are most scarred by their experiences in a war? How do they try to cope with those scars? Have things changed for those who fight in wars today?

6. What role do secrets play in the novel? Many characters have secrets from their past, particularly Brody and Angie. Discuss why they might have kept these secrets and how they came to light. How did learning the truth about each other alter the trajectory of Brody and Angie?s story?

7. There is a moment in the book when Garnet Dern has the power to destroy Angie Madison, whom she views as her rival. Were you surprised when she decided not to use that power? What condition did she impose on Angie? How did you feel about her choice?

8. Discuss the theme of innocence throughout the novel. Consider Scott Madison?s and Del Wolfe?s coming of age and their loss of innocence. How do his fellow citizens? ideas about Noah Bluestone?s innocence shift over time?

9. America in the 1950s is often viewed as a time of peace, prosperity and general well-being. How does this book puncture that idealized vision? How are the inner lives of the characters at odds with their appearances?

10. How did Jewel?s judicial system fail Noah Bluestone? What are the larger implications of the trial?

11. Consider Sam Wicklow?s published book. Why is it important and how did it contribute to the story? How did it rectify history?

12. Charlie Bauer seeks to exonerate Noah Bluestone, and ultimately offers solace to not just Noah, but to other citizens of Jewel. How does Charlie help these individuals? How did her childhood story make her the woman she became?

13. Consider the resolution of Jimmy Quinn?s murder case. Was it just? How do the citizens of Jewel move forward individually, and together?

Author Bio

William Kent Krueger is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE RIVER WE REMEMBER, THIS TENDER LAND, ORDINARY GRACE (winner of the Edgar Award for best novel), and the original audio novella THE LEVEE, as well as 22 acclaimed books in the Cork O?Connor mystery series, including GOD'S COUNTRY, APOSTLE'S COVE, SPIRIT CROSSING, LIGHTNING STRIKE and FOX CREEK. He lives in the Twin Cities with his family.

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