

How alexander hamilton's childhood shaped him

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Ron Chernow's biography is not only a 782-page book describing Alexander Hamilton, but it represents everything about him. From his life to his death, and to every seemingly insignificant moment in between, he is crafted before the observers on the pages with words used as the paint. The nonfiction novel doesn't only describe one of our founding fathers, however. In the process of telling Hamilton's life story, Chernow provides insight and inspiration alike.

Arguably, the era that shaped Hamilton the most was his childhood. It was a traumatic time for the boy, only age ten when the first tragedy had struck him. When he was hardly the youthful young age of ten, James Hamilton Sr., his father, had left their family suddenly. There is no definite answer as to why he left, but the elder variant of his youngest son, our dearest Alexander Hamilton, stated that he left due to poverty and the guilt that came with being unable to provide for children and their mother.

Ron Chernow describes this in his writing on the early page of 21. The text states, " Alexander offered a forgiving but plausible reason for his father's desertion: he could no longer afford to support his family." This was the initiation that had proven young Alexander to be strong enough to handle his life. Though he was hurt due to his father's route, as would any ten-year-old be, Alex stayed in touch with his father throughout their lives. Another thing Alexander had to learn to cope with at a young age was death. Not only did his mother die, but his cousin died as well.

When he was twelve, only two years after the beginning of his father's absence, Alex and his mother had fallen ill to fevers. Both fevers were

severe, but Alex had recovered from it. His mother met a fate paradoxical to him, however. She had suffered an untimely and unfortunate death. She was merely in her thirties. After this death, Alex and his brother, James, moved in with their cousin, Peter Lytton.

This home didn't last very long, as the cousin succumbed to his own twisted thoughts and soon died on an account of suicide. These deaths were bad enough, but once the cousin died, Alex and James were victims of sibling separation. The novel informs the reader of this on page 27, stating, "Peter Lytton's death marked a fork in the road for Alexander and James, who henceforth branched off on separate paths." This simple line about a literal turning point in Alexander's and James' lives from an extensive biography on the former shows the learner that the two brothers had to go their separate ways, whether they liked it or not. To top off the seemingly endless cataclysm that is Alexander Hamilton's childhood, a hurricane completely demolished the island of Nevis, the one Hamilton lived on for his entire life.

With no one and no place to go to, Hamilton turned to the only real form of a friend he ever had; books. In an almost Matilda-like way, Alexander Hamilton read and wrote his way to a new life, ensorcelled by the bound novels and ease of flow from a man's mind to his hand to a writing utensil, therefore creating what one would call a 'story'. In the biography, Ron Chernow writes mostly about his history with the trading business Beekman and Cruger, where he worked as a clerk, which opened almost immeasurable amounts of opportunities for the boy. Due to his extraordinary level of skill in English, French, and trading because of the internship of sorts, he was sent to mainland America to get his education and to continue on in the trade

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market, ending the chain of despair. Like Alexander Hamilton, I feel as if Ron Chernow rose up to the occasion, writing a beautiful and masterful story of the Founding Father's life.

It truly showcases that Chernow is well educated on this precise motif and that he pays close attention to the research he unearthed and his audience. All in all, my thoughts about this novel are nothing but positive. It was definitely worthy of all of the praise given to the author. If I had to endorse this read to anyone, it would be to any lovers of the Broadway musical 'Hamilton' created by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The performers and songs really do encompass Alexander's life, but when the book that inspired the musical is combined with it, the consumer is guaranteed to absolutely love it and learn extensively about it.

Many different points of the book describe a line of a song, but much more in-depth. For example, one of the lines from the first song ('Alexander Hamilton') is as follows: "Then a hurricane came, and devastation reigned, our man saw his future drip, dripping down the drain; put a pencil to his temple, connected it to his brain and he wrote his first refrain, a testament to his pain." In the book, this is further described in the chapter "Hurricane", telling the reader extensive information about the destruction of his home island in the Caribbean and how he used writing as a coping strategy. All in all, I think anyone could learn to love this book and Hamilton alike.