

Sherman alexie the absolutely true diary of a part time indian

Life



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The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie is an eye opening book about the life of an Indian boy in the Reservation called Arnold Spirit Jr, or just Junior as his people call him. Junior is considered weird by his people because of many reasons. He also lead a hard life with his parents, sister, grandmother, and Rowdy as his only friend. As a baby, Junior have too much fluid in his brain that caused his thinking process to slow down, and highly susceptible to seizure.

Fortunately, surgery on his head solved this problem, but with some side effect. Junior's head is larger, one of his eye is near-sighted while the other is far sighted, his feet is also larger making him looks like a walking letter L, and he have ten extra teeth which need to be taken out in one day in order for him to eat normally(Alexie 3). However, despite of all his drawback, Junior manage to live a normal life not including the treatment from all his friend. The majority of the story is divided into two parts which show how junior grow and try to get ' hope'.

The first part is when Junior still go to school in wellpinit without any friend except Rowdy, and the second part is when Junior start going to Reardan and mingle with the white kids. By the end of the novel, Junior is a much different person than the one introduced to us at the beginning. Alexie shows us that only through constant struggle and failure will we ultimately experience true success. At the first part of the story, Junior struggle with his family through their poor life which lead Junior to realize what it means to be poor.

The life of an Indian in the reservation is full of down mainly because they are always poor. Moreover, most of the Indians are alcoholic and tend to

cause many problems when they are drunk. According to research by National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiological Study (NLAES), “ reservation residents were likely to report greater quantities of alcohol consumed per drinking occasion than were other Americans”(Beals 340). The reason that they continue to drink excessively is because they have no means of entertainment, and they want to forget their suffering because of the poor life.

The first event that make Junior realize what it is to be poor is when Oscar, his dog, is sick and dying. His parents choose to shot it to death and there is nothing he can do about it. They are too poor to bring him to the hospital while a bullet only cost a few cents. This event make Junior think that “ povertydoesn’t give you strength or teach you lessons about perseverance. No, poverty only teaches you how to be poor”(Alexie 13). People who is poor will always be poor if they do not start thinking otherwise.

Alexie want to convey this to the reader because there are many poor people who just give up and accept the fact that they are poor. The point where Junior start thinking about hope is at the end of the first part when he throw a book to histeacheraccidentally. When it is time to study geometry, his favorite subject, in his school, Junior realize when he got the book that the previous owner of it was his mother before she even married. Because of this, Junior feel angry that the school is so poor that they cannot afford using a new book to educate their student. Junior then throw the book out of anger but it hit Mr. P, the teacher without any intention to do so.

This is the reality of theeducationin a reservation but, some of the reservation have better education depending on the funding from the <https://assignbuster.com/sherman-alexie-the-absolutely-true-diary-of-a-part-time-indian/>

government or private party. According to research, “ In spite of our continental complaints, it should be obvious that indian education has made some major progress since 1960, and that while funds are hard to come by for many students, the overall picture appears very bright” (Deloria 113). After this accident and Junior got suspended for a week, Mr. P come to Junior’s home to forgive and advice Junior to leave the rez in pursuit of hope. Mr. P told Junior that all the people in the reservation have given up except Junior which become the reason why Junior throw the book.

Mr. P also told Junior that if he choose to stay, the whole reservation will kill him which means that Junior will have the same future as the other from reservation. After Mr. P go home, Junior immediately asked his parents for him to transfer to Reardan, one of the white school 22 miles away from where he lives. His parents consent and support his decision, but not his friends. He got hit by his best friend, and he was labeled traitor by his own people, but he still continue on in order to find hope.

Alexie wants to show us how important it is to be able to throw away one past in order to get to a better future. Most people always afraid to take a step forward because they are not certain what will happen if they step out of the norm, but sometimes, like junior, one will need to be different in order to be successful. The second part of the story is the main cause of Junior’s change although he needs to climb his way up to be accepted by the white people in Reardan. When junior first arrive at Reardan, the first impression that he got from the white kids was the difference of wealth between them and the Indian.

The white kid is the opposite of Indian, and Junior feel that he do not deserve to be there as the only Indian, but this did not stop him. At first, he was mocked and scrutinized by the white kids because he is the only Indian. But, it changes when Roger, one of the popular kids, went to far and cause Junior to hit him in the face. Immediately after that, Junior feel that he will be destroyed by him as revenge but to his surprise, he gain their respect instead. according to his grandmother, the wise person in his family, Junior gain respect because he prove himself to the head of the pack that he is not weak and can be terrorized every time.

Roger become his first friend at the school, and the bullying lessened considerably. The next friend that he got is Penelope, the popular girl in the school, the one who Junior have a crush with. He manage to be her friend after he console her after she got sick, and manage to increase their relationship steadily after that. With two of the most popular kid as his friend, The bullying completely stop, and Junior also gain more friends including Gordy, the genius and weird people in the school, after he help Junior in one of the class that they have together.

Junior also got into the varsity basketball team because the coach remember him as a good shooter and he refuse to give up when the coach test him in the tryouts. This part of Junior's life teach us that respect need to be gained through one own effort, and one need to show something worthy of that respect. Junior start to get a better life in Reardan compared to Wellpinit, but he began to question his identity since he feel more as a white while being Indian is apart-time job for him. Junior first feel that way when he first play against wellpinit in a basketball match.

He feels like he become two different people inside one body. He is an Indian, but he thinks like a white people as his people said, he is like an apple; red on the outside, but white on the inside. In the game, all of the people in the reservation who watch the game except Rowdy, turn their back against Junior. One of the people even throw a quarter to Junior's head which cause bleeding and cause him to go out of the game. When he came back, Rowdy hit his head and give Junior a concussion taking him out from the game.

At the second game against Wellpinit, Junior fight again with Rowdy and even win against him and bring reardan team to victory. He was happy at first, but then he realize that he just beat his own people. Junior continue to ask himself his identity while he also need to handle the death of his father friend, one of the people who support Junior's decision and not brand him a traitor, his grandma and his sister. This three event lead Junior to the answer about his identity that he is both Indian and white or as Rowdy said it in the end of the story, Junior is a nomad.

He will not be tied down by any tradition, and he will continue to improve himself. This also teach us how important it is to know our own identity because it can be used as a base on how to think when in time of confusion. At the end of the story, Junior have already grown a lot after all the experience he got while he study in Reardan. He grow from a nobody into someone who is important to all of his friend in Reardan. At the reservation, all the people also stop mocking him after his grandma death. Rowdy also get back to being friend with Junior and turn to support junior in his decision.

Rowdy also said that Junior is a nomadic Indian, old time Indian who continue to move around to look for food, water and grazing land. Rowdy also said that Junior is the only nomadic Indian in the reservation and no one else. So in the end, Junior manage to gain height where no other people in the reservation ever hope to achieve. Junior got it with sheer effort and never giving up no matter what obstacle he have to face. Even at the death of his family member, how hard it is to travel to school, despite being different, despite having drawback during his childhood, he never gave up and finally got his hope.